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Vol 2 of 5





*Light House on the Coast*

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# WANDERINGS BY THE SEINE.

BY

LEITCH RITCHIE, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

HEATH'S PICTURESQUE ANNUAL, SCHINDERHANNES, ROMANCE  
OF FRENCH HISTORY, &c.

WITH

TWENTY ENGRAVINGS

*From Drawings*

BY

J. M. W. TURNER, ESQ. R.A.

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# ENGRAVINGS

FROM

## Drawings

BY

J. M. W. TURNER, ESQ. R.A.

Arranged according to the manner in which the Views present themselves to the Traveller in sailing up the Seine.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE present volume contains the narrative of a Pedestrian Tour on both banks of the Seine, from its embouchure to Rouen ; and is intended also as a guide to the traveller in the more usual excursion by the steam-boat.

In the next volume the Author will continue his Wanderings, from Rouen to the sources of the river in the Côte d'Or.

*London, Nov. 25, 1833.*





# WANDERINGS BY THE SEINE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE EMBOUCHURE OF THE SEINE.

THAT man is to be pitied who has never sailed from Southampton to Havre-de-Grace! On setting out, the mind is filled with proud and pleasant feelings, as we see gliding gracefully away from us the beautiful land to which we are bound by the ties of kindred and country. Its most radiant aspect is there presented to us; and we turn away from the Garden of England\* as we part from a fair mistress who bids adieu to her lover with a smile. In some moods, the huge cliffs of Dover, and the naked shores of Brighton, may excite sensations grateful to the mind from their harmony; but at all times the view on leaving Southampton is delightful. It rejoices the gay, soothes the melancholy, and even warms the indifferent.

Our feelings do not subside, and hardly change, even when in mid-channel the vast sea is spread out before, behind, and around us—without beginning and without end—when the heavens and the waters are only separated by the line of the visible horizon, which

\* The Isle of Wight.

describes a circle, whereof we ourselves are the centre. Even there we know that in another hour the land will appear again like a film on the edge of the sea, till, waxing by degrees, it shall acquire form, and colour, and consistence, before our eyes, and elevate its mountains above our head, and open its bays to receive us in their bosom. The sea-birds sail over our ship, hailing us with a hoarse scream as they pass—some bound for the coast of England, and some for that of France; but all bearing steadily on, like mariners who know their way.

By and by the distant horizon seems clouded and uneven, although the rest of the expanse, both of sea and sky, is without a spot, and glows in all the radiance of a summer afternoon. A kind of film gathers on that part of the rim of the ocean; but as it sometimes shifts its place, and sometimes disappears, when we look steadily, it is attributed rather to an imperfection in our own eyes than to any reality in the scene. In the course of a few turns more upon the deck, the film has changed into a cloud—dusky, lowering, and mysterious; which gradually extends along the line of the sea, and sometimes overflows, as it were, and enters within the charmed circle. Soon the seeming cloud forms, settles, and becomes steady; its edges are more definite; its masses are divided into height and hollow; a daub of colour here and there begins to give effect to the unfinished picture; and when at length the sunlight is able to pierce the shades of distance, or rather when our own eyes have power to follow it, we see palpably before us the coast of France.

Nor is this consummation—foreseen and certain though it was—unattended by the hopes, fears, and disappointments, which give dramatic interest to an event. The varying phenomena of the scene are all subjects of doubt, conjecture, and argument; the telescope is handed eagerly from one to another; and even the sailors, who behold the same spectacle every week of their lives, are moved with the same interest which agitates the passengers.

On nearing the land, we observe two lines of coast, to the right and left, separated by a gulf of water four or five leagues broad. This is the embouchure of the Seine; on the right bank of which, at the entrance, stands Havre, and on the left, Honfleur. The river is studded, but not impeded—(for here it seems not a river, but the sea)—by immense sand-banks, along which the eye is carried towards Quillebœuf, a distance of nearly six leagues; where the expanse of water appears to terminate, forming in the whole an immense oblong lake.

It was already the commencement of evening when we landed at Havre; and the crowd on the pier, the lights here and there in the windows, and the noises of the busy streets, gave indication of a great and populous town. There is something, in fact, altogether Parisian in the aspect of this place, which is in reality the port of Paris; and while wandering through its lofty and dusky thoroughfares, more especially at night, the traveller might easily be able to persuade himself that he traversed one of the quarters of the huge metropolis. The Rue de Paris, more especially, would

be considered a handsome street in any capital ; but it is not of mere beauty we talk, but of character—and this is altogether French and Parisian.

In order to obtain an idea of Havre, however, in its distinct individual character, it is necessary to view the town in its sea-port aspect ; and the splendid engraving before us will enable the reader to do so as well as if he stood upon the pier itself. A steam-boat is just about to leave the quay, probably for Southampton—no, for Honfleur—which will account for the unusual crowd.

Havre is, comparatively, an infant city, dating only from the beginning of the sixteenth century, when its foundation was laid by Francis I. ; although the honour of the idea at least, if nothing more, is due to his predecessor, Louis XII. It is not wonderful that the French kings should have formed a strong predilection for a port situated at the mouth of the Seine—the river of Paris—the river of France ; but even their efforts would have been insufficient to have compelled towards its newly born harbour the great stream of commerce, but for the fortuitous aid of circumstances. Havre owes its prosperity, as it did its origin, to the calamities of its neighbours. The destruction of Harfleur by the moving sands of the river called it into existence ; the revolution, so prolific of ruin, was its nurse ; and the trade which deserted the other ports of France came in full flow to the embouchure of the Seine.

The construction of this city of harbours, called *Le Havre* (harbour), *par excellence*, was a Herculean



Engraved by James H. Allie





task. A town built upon the site of the few fishermen's huts which once stood upon these solitary shores, would have been useless as a sea-port; and it was necessary, therefore, to wrest a territory from the sea itself for its foundation. Eleven years after, on the night of the 15th of January, 1525, when the inhabitants of the new city were asleep in their lofty houses, dreaming of further conquests, and smiling at the roar of that stormy ocean which was now their slave, a sound of terror awoke them. It *was* the roar of the sea, wasting its fury no longer against the stone walls of its masters, but riding in triumph over them, and sweeping away every obstacle to its progress. The whole town was at length covered by this inundation, known to the people of the district by the name of the *Male-Marée*, a great proportion of the inhabitants drowned, and twenty-eight fishing-vessels floated over the fields into the ditches of the Château de Greville. After recovering from their consternation, the survivors, with a spirit worthy even of the Dutch, set themselves to repair their walls, and drive back the great enemy into his prison-depths. In a very little time, Havre raised its head anew, crowned with the spoils of Neptune; when another inundation carried terror, and almost despair, into the hearts of its builders. This new inroad of the sea was called the *Coup de Vent de Saint-Félix*, and a procession was instituted in honour of the unlucky saint, which, no doubt, was effectual,—as a similar disaster, at least to any considerable extent, never again occurred.

Up to this time Havre was not only subject to the

assaults of the ocean, but to those of the still more bitter Rabelais, in whose immortal work "*la grande nau Française*" received honourable mention—a stupendous ship built by Francis I., which it was found impossible, on account of her immense size, to launch into the sea. Still, it must be confessed, that we owe the fact of such mention only to tradition; for at present there is no one extant who has read Rabelais.

Scarcely a score of years, however, after the first inundation, a fleet issued from this laughter-stricken port, so considerable as to awe the English into peace; and in the reign of Charles IX., Havre had become so important that it was given up to our Queen Elizabeth by the Protestants, as a guarantee for the assistance which she promised to send them. The Earl of Warwick, accordingly, with six thousand English, took possession of the place. They retained it in their hands for some time, and only capitulated after a long and gallant defence.

The public buildings of Havre are not remarkable; but the old tower of Francis I., on the northern jetty, still draws the attention of travellers, on account of a deed of arms, altogether original, which was performed there towards the close of the sixteenth century.

All that is known to history with regard to this exploit is, that it was undertaken as a means of momentary escape from the punishment of some trivial offence; and with regard to its hero, that he was a native of Caen, and that his name was Aignan Lecomte. This adventure, given as an isolated fact, unconnected with the other incidents of his life, resembles an act of

aimless insanity, which we pity while we admire. We, however, who permit our insignificant life to run away in researches after details which are beneath the notice of the historian, have discovered, with much difficulty, a train of causes that confer at least a kind of wild dignity upon the frenzy of Aignan Lecomte. We do not pretend that the author of a deed which had no political consequences, and could have none, is entitled to occupy much space in the chronicles of a nation. The following anecdote, therefore, is not offered as a portion of history, but merely as a historical note, which future writers may append to the reign of Henri III.

#### AIGNAN LECOMTE.

When Aignan Lecomte first took up arms, it was not because he cared a rush about either of the parties which then rent the state asunder. It was the era of the Holy League—of the war of the three Henrys, Henri III, Henri de Guise, and Henri de Navarre—of the murder of Mary of Scotland—of the defeat of the *Invincible Armada*; in short, it was the era, *par excellence*, of modern romance. The brain of Aignan Lecomte was on fire. He had been brought up in that learned city, the ancient capital of Lower Normandy, surrounded by shadows, and living in a world of imagination. He had glided from boyhood, like a spirit, through the cloisters of Saint-Etienne; his footsteps echoing

among the tombs of the mighty dead, and his soul conversing with the heroes of the past, whose voices ran whispering along the mystic walls.

When at length the time was come, and the youth, stepping proudly upon the threshold of manhood, looked round upon the new world he was about to enter, he was like a slumberer awakened from some glorious dream to find the figments of his sleep converted into realities.

All the world was in arms. The shaveling monk held up a dagger for the crucifix, and the stern minister of Calvinism kept his Bible open with a naked sword. The flames of burning villages reddened the horizon ; the shrieks of insulted maidens rent the air ; the idols of the old religion fell groaning to the ground, or were upheld in their niches by a pile of dead bodies. Every where there was the marching of soldiers, and the processions of priests — the elevation of the war-banner and of the host — the shouting of hymns and battle-cries — the roar of artillery drowning the swell of the organ, or of the congregational psalm — the shrieks of women, mingled with the tinkle of the sacristan's bell scaring away ill spirits from the altar.

Aignan Lecomte looked, and listened, and panted. The incidents that were only distinguished by others in their relative character of fortunate or unfortunate, possessed for his visionary mind an overwhelming interest. He already fancied himself a hero of romance, ignorant that he would one day become a personage of history ; and, infected by the atmosphere of Saint-Etienne, where the bones of the mighty Bastard had spread

enchantment around,\* he one moment demanded of his fates another England to conquer ; and the next, yielding to softer impressions peculiar to his early years, resolved to call the youth of Caen around him, and fly to the rescue or revenge of the lovely and unhappy Queen of Scots.

These reveries at length gave way to the necessity of the times. A part must be chosen in the drama of life. All civil professions were ruined — all trades broken up but that of the armourer. Aignan Lecomte — without money, for his patrimony had been devoured by the Leaguers and Huguenots between them, and without interest, for he was an orphan — became a private soldier, determining to climb upwards with his pike from the ranks.

Soon after he had entered the army his division was ordered to Havre. The effect of the scenery of the embouchure of the Seine upon a mind cultivated to every *useless* purpose may be conceived. Aignan Lecomte, in spite of the hard realities of a soldier's life, became every day more a dreamer : the moments of relaxation from duty were spent in wandering along the cliffs of the Hève, or in tracing the line of the sea as it rolled at their base ; and on these occasions, his mind, free from the ponderous discipline of the garrison, recovered its spring, and soared once more into the cloud-land of fancy.

In the meantime, it must be confessed, these grave

\* They were sacrilegiously disinterred during these troubles, and again in the anarchy of the revolution.



realities, from which he delighted to fly, would not have offered much attraction even to the most matter-of-fact mind. The construction of the army at this crisis was loose in the extreme. It included not only the religious, the honourable, and the romantic, but the low and the vile—the very offscourings of society. The dishonest debtor fled to the ranks to spend the money of his creditors in debauchery; the ruined gamester, the prowling robber, even the midnight murderer—all sought in the camp a refuge for their crimes. The consequence was, that the usual laws of discipline were found to be of no avail; and regulations were established and enforced, adapted more to the character of the men they were meant to restrain, than consistent with the honour of the profession of arms. Offences were classed without reference to their moral relationship; and thus a breach of etiquette was visited as mutiny, and a failure, however slight in point of time, received the general punishment of “disobedience of orders.” The penalties were conceived in the same spirit; and the man of honour who did not answer to his name the instant it was called, received the same ignominious chastisement which awaited the coward or the thief.

During a humiliating scene of this kind, Lecomte one day found himself on duty, keeping off the crowd from the spot where the provost-marshal-men were performing their office. It was not an ordinary occasion; for the sufferer was known to be a respectable man, and to be incapable of any baseness. The offence, besides, for which he suffered the degrading punish-



ment of the bastinado, was one which, in circumstances slightly modified, would have assumed the character of a virtue. In the hope that his absence would not be discovered, he had absented himself without leave for the purpose of being married to the girl of his heart; the time had sped by without his cognisance; and before the ceremony was fairly began, he had been dragged away from the altar, and, with scarcely a form of trial, tied up to the ignominious stake.

Aignan Lecomte, with a sickening heart and averted eyes, kept his post in the show; but ever and anon he was compelled to turn round for the purpose of resisting the encroachments of the rabble. On one of these occasions he saw a young woman, apparently of higher station than the rest of the spectators, struggling with the crowd; and surprise and indignation at the unfeminine taste which led her into such a scene made him turn away his head. The next casual glance, however, convinced him that she was an unwilling spectator, and that the object of her struggles was to escape. But, soon finding her efforts unavailing, she stood still; her eyes dwelt for a moment upon Lecomte, and his fell beneath the look of mingled scorn and hate with which she seemed to regard him.

A shriek from the unhappy culprit broke for a moment the current of his thoughts; and, after the agitation it caused was over, he felt still more unwilling to encounter the gaze of the female. He continued to see her, however, with his mind's eye. She was young and fair—O how fair! and in dress and manner, though not higher than the rank to which he was

entitled by birth and habit, yet far beyond the access of a private soldier. His cheeks tingled, half with shame, half with delight ; and he would have given a month's pay to have been able to look upon her again, without being seen in return. In the midst of his hesitation, the execution of the sentence finished, and the detachment employed in keeping the lines was dismissed.

Aignan Lecomte looked round like a man awakening from a trance. The crowd was dissolving as suddenly as it had assembled ; the object of his reverie had vanished like a spirit ; and he inquired, almost with satisfaction, whether her appearance had not been only a dream. He drew his hat over his eyes, and wandered on, moody and perplexed ; yet every now and then raised his head unconsciously, to cast a hasty glance among the passers-by.

All on a sudden he encountered again the look of the young girl ; and, moved by an impulse which he could neither direct nor control, he strode up to her, and seized her arm.

“ What would you ? ” said she, calmly.

Aignan Lecomte dropped his prize, as if he had been wounded, and fell back several paces. He raised his hand to his hat, and attempted to speak ; but not a word would come. When she turned away, however, after looking at him steadily, “ One moment ! ” said he, gasping.

“ What would you ? ” demanded the damsel again.

“ You have done me injustice,” said he. She looked back towards the place of punishment.

“ No matter ! ” replied Aignan Lecomte.

“What are you?”

“I am a man—and a Frenchman!”

She looked at him long and keenly; and at length said, “I believe it!”

“These are scenes,” remarked Lecomte, somewhat relieved,—“God knows if they be necessary!—scenes which overthrow many a dream of honour, and crimson many a proud cheek.”

“And you, too, have your dreams of honour!—You—a private soldier—the subject of the lash!” He smiled grimly.

“Subject,” replied he, “I may be, and no doubt am; but the lash shall never exert its sovereignty over me.”

“I believe it!” said the damsel again.

“But you must not think more harshly of my unhappy comrade than you can help. He was guilty of no crime, but that of calculating time falsely; and deceived as he was by love—”

“I know all. No matter: his wounds will soon heal, the nuptial rites will be recommenced, and your comrade will forget his dishonour,”—he sighed heavily, as a crowd of instances rushed upon his memory,—“*for his bride is not a Frenchwoman!*”

Aignan Lecomte started as she pronounced these words, while her cheek glowed, and her lip curled with a beautiful pride; and as her eyes met his, they shot forth a fire which seemed to penetrate into the innermost recesses of his being. He walked on with her to a small but somewhat genteel-looking house near the sea-shore, where she resided with her widowed mother;

and there the two chance-acquaintances took leave by shaking hands.

It must not be supposed, however, that they had arrived at this point of intimacy all at once. When the excited feelings which had thrown them into contact had subsided, they found themselves unconsciously on a footing somewhat closer than that which is warranted by the acquaintanceship of half an hour. They glided gradually, therefore, into a conversation partaking of the tone of confidence generally assumed at their years; and before they had reached the termination of the walk, Aignan Lecomte knew the whole history, and something of the character, of his fair companion; while Matilde St. Amand was aware that the private soldier beside her was descended of genteel parentage, and had received a liberal education at Caen.

As for the more minute discoveries which took place between them, these have not arrived at the knowledge of the chronicler. He is led to conjecture, however, that Matilde appeared to Lecomte in the likeness of a young woman of twenty or twenty-one, somewhat dark of complexion and melancholy in temperament, and possessing withal that sort of spiritual beauty which inspires a love resembling more a devotion than a passion. Aignan himself might have been taken for her brother; and perhaps it was this mutual likeness which first drew them together. There are more sympathies in the world than those developed by the laws of chemistry!

He was taller and darker, but not more robust. His figure, indeed, was as slight as a girl's, but then it was knit together like whipcord. The fierce and con-

stant working of his mind appeared to operate on the muscles of his body, which seemed to have acquired strength from the violent action to which they were habituated. An observer, however, would have said that this extreme tension would be of short duration—that the bow would soon break, and become useless; while the eyes, shedding a wild and strange light over his dusky features and beneath his coal-black hair, might have indicated to the physiognomists of the period a troubled life and an early grave.

Nevertheless, Aignan Lecomte was all the better for this adventure. The day-dreams in which he was accustomed to indulge had of late been almost insufficient for the solace of a spirit galled and fretted by the untoward circumstances of life. Many a fairy edifice had been broken into ruins by the sound of the lash—many a gay and golden vision put to flight by a drunken shout, an impious oath, or a brutal jest. He had not as yet fleshed his maiden sword—no opportunity of acquiring distinction had occurred; shut up in a garrison from the very commencement of his career of arms, he had been condemned to a slothful and inglorious life. How different was this from the fate which he had anticipated! His “comrades in glory” were lower in mind than the lowest populace of Caen; his greatest feat of arms was to attend a parade or an execution; and the highest reward he could expect for perseverance and diligence in his profession was *exemption* from punishment!

Now, however, his thoughts, if nothing more, had a new employment. They did not waste themselves, as

heretofore, on shadows too unsubstantial to serve as a buckler against the disgusts of the world. Matilde,

“ A woman, yet a spirit too,”

served as a refuge for his wearied mind ; his dream, since he knew her, “ was not *all* a dream ;” his purposes, before so vague and fleeting, had received a definite direction ; a star had appeared in the dark heaven of his destiny, to guide and enlighten him.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE TOWER OF FRANCIS THE FIRST.

THE absences of Aignan Lecomte from the barracks at length became so frequent as to rouse the curiosity of his comrades, although he had always taken care to reappear before the hour struck which delivered him up to the discipline of the ranks. There was, in fact, not a soldier in the garrison, whose conduct, even in the minutiae of etiquette, was more irreproachable ; and the officers looked upon Aignan Lecomte as one of those machines of habit that are shaped by nature into the instruments of military ambition.

Among those who were most anxious to pry into the secrets of Aignan Lecomte, was a quondam schoolfellow, called Letournois, who had attained a rank somewhat higher than that of our visionary in the same company. There had once existed a sort of rivalry between the two young men, in which, however, the talents and activity of Letournois were no match for the wild enthusiasm of his competitor. A series of petty defeats, both in the college and the fencing-room, had embittered his spirit ; and even after he had found himself, through the influence of his friends, in a situation to *command* the object of his dislike, he still continued to regard him with habitual jealousy and fear. As for Lecomte, he neither loved nor hated his fellow-towns-

man. There was so little in common between them, that after leaving Caen he had almost forgotten there was such a being in existence; yet we must confess, that when he found himself suddenly placed in a situation immediately beneath him, it was not without some chagrin that he reflected on the injustice of fortune. Nothing, however, had as yet occurred to awaken the spirit of rivalry—which so often includes envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness; and Letournois continued to command, and Lecomte to obey, with the mechanical regularity which befits the puppets of war.

Aignan Lecomte, notwithstanding, began to be surprised, nay annoyed, at meeting so frequently with his old rival in his walks. On more than one occasion he was compelled, by the presence of Letournois, to forego his purpose of keeping rendezvous with his mistress; and the change from supercilious coldness to all the warmth of friendship, which took place about the same time in his comrade's manner, was by no means sufficient to counterbalance such a vexation. Several times the lovers when together were met, in spite of their precautions, by this person; and Lecomte felt a pang more painful than he cared to acknowledge even to himself, as he observed the look of deep but momentary admiration which he fixed upon his mistress. On such occasions he concealed his embarrassment by a shew of cordiality foreign to his heart, and returned the friendly salutation which he received with apparent warmth. Matilde, owing to this little *équivoque*, was led to imagine that a confidential intimacy subsisted between the two young men; and when she met Letournois



alone, treated him with the distinction to which he was entitled as the friend of Lecomte.

One evening, while lingering near the place of rendezvous, and wondering what could delay her lover, this attentive friend broke in upon her meditations out of breath.

“Mademoiselle,” said he, panting, “this evening you wait in vain.”

“You are sent with an explanation?”

“No. My friend was unexpectedly ordered to attend the execution of a military sentence, and I, being exempted from a duty abhorrent to my nature, requested him to employ me in any message he might wish to send. The form of his denial it is needless to repeat; but he turned away from me, laughing, to join his comrades. Knowing, however, that you would wait—that your mind would be uneasy—that the evening air was cold—in short, anxious to spare you one uncomfortable thought, or one unnecessary moment, I am here!”

“I will walk back with you to the town,” said Matilde, after a pause.

“I cannot permit it; your welfare is dearer to me even than such a happiness. Our friend is of a strange, wayward temper; and many of our sex, you know, even of those who claim every possible liberty of action for themselves, are singularly scrupulous in the freedom they accord to women. We must not be seen together.”

“Then I shall walk alone; the twilight has only commenced.”

“Be it so,” said Letournois, sadly; “I shall attend

your steps at a little distance, to defend you from the insults of the licentious soldiery."

Matilde hesitated: "Are you good at the oar?" said she. "Can you row this little skiff round the point? I shall get one of my cousins to bring me back."

"I lack the skill of our friend," replied Letournois; "but I have all his strength, and, more than all, his good will;" and without further speech he handed her into the boat.

"And now," said he, when he had shoved off, "may I crave to know your business at Havre?"

"You have a right to ask the question," she replied; "and my reluctance to answer it proceeds only from the fear of wounding an honourable spirit. It is my duty to doubt every thing rather than the—the—politeness of Monsieur Lecomte. I therefore doubt *you*; and my business at Havre is to ascertain what is the true cause of his breaking his word, and refusing to avail himself of the means of sparing me an unnecessary disappointment."

"You are candid, mademoiselle; but since the effect of the experiment cannot but be in my favour, I do not repine. For *both* our sakes, however, we must not be known to have been together. Promise me, were it only as the fare of your voyage, that you will not mention to Lecomte that you have seen me this evening!"

"I do not like concealment, but I cannot refuse such a trifle." Letournois appeared satisfied.

They swept far out from the shore to avoid the current that runs by the rocks. It was a heavenly evening; the sea was as smooth as a lake, and the

noises of the land were too distant to interrupt the silence of the deep. Letournois more than once lay upon his oars; he seemed on the point of addressing Matilde; but suddenly abandoning his purpose, as if by a strong effort, he once more constrained himself to his task, and the light skiff cut through the water as a bird cleaves the air. The distant clock of the town had told seven when they set out; and the chimes, on landing, informed them that the voyage had occupied just half an hour.

When Matilde bade adieu to her companion, she walked straight to the barracks, and saw that the information she had received was correct. The execution of the sentence was just over; and the next moment her lover was dismissed from duty.

“Matilde!” exclaimed he, when they met, “this indeed is kind!”

“Had you no means of informing me of what has occurred?”

“No—yes—none that I could think of availing myself of.” Matilde was silent; and they walked on in mutual embarrassment till they reached the pier.

“You came, then, by water?”

“Yes.”

Aignan Lecomte was about to ask, “With whom?” but something sealed his lips. Her question as to his having any means of letting her know that he was detained from the rendezvous had been pointed; her manner was cold and restrained; every thing convinced him that she had seen and spoken with Letournois—nay, that this early rival had rowed her up alone

from the bay. An uncomfortable sensation passed across his heart, already vexed and embittered by the scenes of the evening. Matilde looked towards the skiff—hesitated—lingered—and at length withdrew her arm. At that moment a new change came over the wayward spirit of Lecomte, and his lips ventured to make the offer which she had no doubt expected as a thing of course. But it was too late; she had already beckoned to her cousin, whom she saw on the pier.

“Will you not allow me ——” said Lecomte, faintly.

“Excuse me; I cannot take advantage of your politeness.” She leaped into the boat, and in another moment he saw her gliding away on the smooth sea.

Lecomte stood for some time upon the pier like a man in a dream. The transaction, similar to most of those which determine the fortune of love, had been of so slight and trivial a nature that it hardly presented a hold for his reflections. He asked himself in vain what had occurred, or what spell had paralysed his faculties. He recalled the words and air of Matilde, her pause of expectation, the indignant manner in which she had withdrawn her arm; and, wondering at the infatuation which had beset him, he began to walk with huge strides towards the habitation of Madame Saint-Amand.

It was dark before he arrived; but as the distance was less than by sea, he knew that he must be before Matilde, and walked leisurely down towards the rock which served as a landing-place.

“Good night, Monsieur Lecomte,” said some one passing him.

“Who speaks?”

“ It is I,” replied the voice — “ Antoine Saint-Amand. On landing my cousin just now, she bade me run home as fast I could, for fear the gates should be shut.”

“ So much the better,” thought Aignan Lecomte. “ It is right that we should be alone for the single minute I can command. Hark! it is her footstep—accompanied by that of another!—by that of a man!”—and he shrunk, he knew not why, behind a tree.

“ It shall be done, mademoiselle,” said Letournois, passing. “ Your commands are to me like the voice of fate. Your proud and careless lover shall be here to-morrow morning, if I drag him with my own hands to your feet.”

“ I shall expect him,” said Matilde. “ You misunderstand his character in this—at least I think, I believe, you do—as completely as I *know* you have done in the other case connected with high and honourable feeling.”

“ I have known him longer than you!”

“ Ridiculous!” and she spoke angrily. “ *He* crouch, like a beaten cur, beneath the lash! *He* jest upon his own degradation!——”

“ Only wait, Matilde! I ask nothing but mercy as regards myself; and I wish you to believe nothing but your own senses. If such is really his character, there will soon be ample means of discovery with a discipline like ours. Nay, if one more week passes before it takes place, I shall confess that I have wronged him, and endeavour to obtain my transfer to another



regiment, far from a spot so dangerous to my peace." They passed on. Lecomte shook as if in an ague.

"Serpent!" said he, grinding his teeth — "what holds me from crushing him? But, no! I have a greater stake at hazard than my life; and now that I possess a key to his manœuvres, I can foil, and trample on the villain at my ease."

He had not yet emerged from his ambush when Letournois passed him again, walking rapidly, and alone, towards the water-side. "I have him in the toils!" muttered he as he passed.

"At the sword's point before I am two days older," replied Lecomte mentally; and as soon as the sound of his enemy's footsteps ceased, he sprang from his concealment, and hurried back to his quarters, which he reached in good time.

That night he went upon guard at the Tower of Francis I.; and when his vigil was expired, Letournois, as the officer of the watch, gave the word of command which relieved him.

"Lecomte," said he in a whisper, "I fear you hardly think me your friend; and yet I am now about to do you a service. I know — it matters not how — that Mademoiselle Saint-Amand is desirous of seeing you to-morrow morning before roll-call. Will you keep the rendezvous?"

"Yes."

"Enough."

As soon as the gates were opened, Aignan Lecomte left the Tower, and walked towards the dwelling of

Madame Saint-Amand with as much speed as if he was afraid of being too late for an appointment. All was silent and motionless. The eyelids of the house (which are its window-shutters) were still closed. He wandered about, like an unquiet spirit, watching the signs of morning, till the whole house was astir, and the whole atmosphere filled with the multitudinous noises of daylight. Matilde only was unseen and unheard. A portion of her window-shutters, it is true, had been long since opened; and well he knew the small delicate hand which was half visible while performing the office. She had forgotten her promise, however, to Letournois; she did not keep the appointment made under her own authority.

Little did the lover know that the object of his meditations had been dressed, in the impatience of her spirit, long before daylight; and that at that moment she was pacing her room in an agony of uncertainty, torn asunder, as it were, between pride and love! At length the door was thrown open, and Matilde, slowly, and, as it seemed, carelessly, walked forth.

“Star of my destiny!” cried Aignan Lecomte, with his wonted enthusiasm; “I have waited two hours for your rising, and now I have only a moment to greet you! Dearest Matilde, may I come here in the evening, for even now I must be gone?”

“No, my friend,” replied his mistress. “We are at the commencement of our first misunderstanding; and I shall not trust to the events even of a few hours. You shall row me round the point, and we can explain as we glide along.”

“ With a little more time, this would be happiness ; but—”

“ Hark to the chimes !—we have still three quarters ; and the voyage, on a smooth sea like this, takes only half an hour.”

“ I do hate the smoothness of the sea ! When the storm shrieks, and the waters boil, then you know what it is you risk ; but, nevertheless, since you wish it—”

“ There is not a speck on the sky, not a wrinkle on the deep, and we have three quarters good to a voyage of half an hour !”

“ Enough ! The moment will soon come when I shall prove that I possess the spirit of a man ; but now—I do confess it—I am haunted by the terrors of a boy !”

They were soon at the margin of the sea, and Matilde seated in the stern of the skiff ; and as they commenced their voyage, they entered, with the habitual frankness of honourable minds, upon a conversation which soon dissipated the clouds that had beset them. Lecomte, in the meantime, whose mind was continually haunted by the dread of laying himself open, even accidentally, to dishonour, did not relax for an instant in his exertions ; but, employing all his strength and skill, which were both great, plied the oars with such vigour as almost threatened to defeat its own purpose, by breaking them against the resisting waters.

They were at length directly opposite the point, and therefore midway on the voyage.

“ Great Heaven ! what is that ?” cried Lecomte.  
“ One—two—three ; it is impossible !”

“ The clock is wrong,” said Matilde, with decision.



“ Our minds have been too much occupied to permit us to notice the lapse of time ; but I never saw you exert more strength or skill at the oar. We shall perform the distance much within the half hour.”

“ She rows lazily,” muttered Lecomte. “ I feel as if I was swimming on some sea of the night-mare, and rowing desperately, yet hardly producing motion on the boat.”

“ She is as dry as this hand !” cried Matilde ; “ look there—there is hardly a drop of water beneath the planks ; and yet she *does* move unwillingly ! Give way, my dear friend ! Spare not your noble strength ; for, if the clock is right, we shall have warm work to keep our time !”

Lecomte bent forward upon the oars, and strained his well-knit arms till the sinews seemed ready to crack. In vain, however, he strove,

“ Till the toil-drops fell from his brow like rain ;”

the same sluggishness in the motion of the boat continued ; he became convinced that the clock was right ; the pier was still far distant ; the minute of roll-call was near at hand.

Matilde grew pale—she seemed ready to faint ; but the next moment, starting, as if from a trance, she plunged her head over the gunwale, and looked down towards the keel through the calm bright waters.

“ Traitor ! traitor !” she shrieked. “ O for a hatchet !” —and she was about to dart over the side. In a moment she was in the grasp of her lover.

“ Take the oars, Matilde !” he said, almost sternly ;

and he leaped into the sea, and disappeared beneath the boat.

A board was fastened to the keel in such a manner as trebled the resistance offered by the vessel to the water; and it was not before Lecomte had come three times to the surface to breathe, that even his desperation was able to detach it.

“Bravely done!” cried Matilde. “Take the seaward oar, and leave the other to me—I am stronger than you think!”

“Hearken, love!” said Lecomte, as they pulled for life and death. “The fiend who has betrayed me will no doubt watch well for his victim. If the hour strikes before I reach the Tower of Francis I., you know what must follow. What do you counsel?”

“That if the hour strikes before your foot is on the shore, we put about, and run to sea, and trust to Heaven for the rest!”

“It shall be done. Even desertion is more honourable than—Hark!”

“No—no!”

“Hark, again!”

“It is nothing! Our ears are haunted by the spirits of sound. Give way, dear love; see how I swing you round—For shame!”

“My noble girl! Hark!—no, no!—we are yet in time; the pier is just a-head. Hark!”

“’Tis nothing! How we spin through the water! There—another stroke—another—another—God be praised!” and the vessel at length bounding alongside the pier, grazed the stones as she flew.



Engraved by R. Wallis

Drawn by J.M.V. Turner R.A.



To spring upon his feet—to catch by a projecting stone, and vault upon the quay, was but the work of a moment for Lecomte.

“Bravely done!” said Matilde. “God and good angels be your speed! O holy heaven!—What is that? The hour struck! Come back!” she shrieked, “back, if you be a man!—back, in the name of Heaven!—back, in the name of God!” and, her mortal faculties unable longer to bear the excitation of her mind, she fell senseless upon the beams.

Aignan Lecomte, in the meantime, did not cease to fly—the voice of his mistress, lost in the sound of that sullen bell, which, after its reality had passed away, continued still to peal through the depths of his soul.

He reached his post at the Tower of Francis I., which, perhaps, did not very greatly differ in appearance from the tower of the present day, as represented in the annexed view.

“You are my prisoner!” said Letournois, advancing with four men of the guard; “surrender your arms!”

Lecomte, who had already drawn his sword, struck a blow at the traitor, without a word of reply, which would have cleft him from shoulder to hip, had it not been parried by one of his comrades. The whole then closed upon him, not for the purpose of wounding, but of disarming him; and no man was more sedulously careful that he should be taken unhurt than Letournois. It was owing to this forbearance that the mutineer was able to fight his way backward to the gate of the fortress, which was now deserted by the few soldiers it contained (at the hour of morning muster), who

were drawn from the interior by the noise of the disturbance.

Aignan Lecomte made a stand at the threshold for several minutes, and then suddenly darted into the tower, and closed the gate. His enemies paused, seeing that their victim had run, of his own accord, into a trap, and was now secure; and some of them began to joke upon the oddity of a single man offering resistance to such a power. Letournois at length attempted to push open the gate with his foot, and then tried to force it with the but-end of a musket. It was in vain: the gate was fast; and they heard the last of the heavy iron bolts grating against the stone as it was thrust into the wall.

In vain they summoned this strange garrison to surrender; in vain they thundered with their muskets at the gate: the only reply was the echo of the sound as it rumbled through the deserted building. Under circumstances so unusual, Letournois did not dare to proceed further on his own responsibility; but despatched a messenger to the governor, to inform him that the Tower of Francis I. had been taken by a soldier of the guard, and was defended by him against the arms of the ex-garrison.

The surprise which this announcement created may be conceived. The citizens shut up their shops, and buckled on their swords; some ran through the streets shouting treason; even the governor dreaded that the mutiny was more considerable than it had been represented; and speedily the drum beat to arms, the whole of the garrison turned out, and the Tower of Francis I. was regularly invested by the troops.



A summons to surrender, under the authority of the governor, met with the same inattention as the former, while the mutineer was observed looking down from one of the windows upon the scene, his hair hanging in disordered masses over his brow, and his dark eyes blazing beneath with fury and disdain. A column was then ordered to advance and force the gate; but the attempt was ineffectual; and, the besiegers being by this time reinforced by a body of more than a thousand armed citizens, the signal was given for a general assault.

Till now the mutineer appeared to have been satisfied with the passive resistance he was able to offer by means of the bolts and bars of the fortress; but after listening for a while to the shouts of the besiegers, and the thunder of their musketry, directed against every opening where he might be supposed to stand, either resolving to defend his liberty to the last, or unconsciously animated by the common instinct of our nature, to turn upon and rend those who would destroy us, he started from his inaction, and rushed upon the ramparts.

Here, collecting a quantity of large stones for ammunition, he hurled them down upon the assailants, remaining himself secure from their fire; and so certain was his aim, that the groans of the wounded soon conferred a terrible reality upon a scene which might otherwise have appeared to be only a mimicry of war. The besiegers now became furious; and, "Ladders! ladders!" was the cry; "To the walls! for shame!" They planted a ladder at a window distant from the



scene of Lecomte's operations ; but his quick ear had caught the sound, and the first man who stepped on the ledge was received upon his halberd.

And thus, flying from window to window, wherever his enemies appeared, and ever and anon rushing back to the ramparts and hurling heavy stones upon their heads—thus, we say, did Aignan Lecomte defy the united forces of the troops and citizens of Havre, and sustain gallantly a siege, or rather one continuous assault of arms, for more than three hours, in the old Tower of Francis I.\*

Letournois, in the mean time, stood inactive in the rear, and some paces distant from the dense mass of the besiegers. Whether he felt any touch of pity or admiration it is impossible to say ; but more than once he was seen to raise his carbine to his shoulder, and as often to lower it again instantaneously. At last, after a long look behind towards the sea, he brought his piece once more to bear upon the ramparts, and remained patiently in one attitude for nearly a quarter of an hour. At the end of that time, the shoulder of the mutineer appeared unsheltered, as he stooped to rend a stone from the wall. Letournois's finger touched the trigger ; but he checked himself. Then the leg of his enemy was partially exposed, and again the finger caught the fatal spring, and was again withheld by a strong effort of forbearance, betrayed in the white lip and clenched teeth of the assassin. At length the head of the muti-

\* It is necessary to say, that these facts are strictly historical. The tower is now no longer a fortress, but is the resort of all strangers who wish to enjoy the splendid view of the sea which it affords.

neer appeared above the ramparts for an instant—and that instant was enough.

It was not to watch the operations of his enemies that the motion was made, for he could not see those that were near the tower. His eyes were upon the blue, calm waters below; and in the same moment a bullet pierced his brain, and Aignan Lecomte fell dead upon the walls.

As soon as Letournois saw that his rival was no more, taking advantage of the confusion of the scene, he left his post, and ran at full speed to the pier. The skiff had drifted away with the tide, and was now at some distance. Matilde sat on the beams, her hands folded in her lap, and her eyes fixed upon the Tower of Francis I. After a moment's hesitation, he leaped into a boat that lay moored by a line to the pier; and shipping a single oar in the stern, began to scull out with all his might.

As he neared the object of his pursuit, Matilde, starting suddenly from her lethargy, seized both oars, and applying to the task a strength and skill not usually found in woman, made the light skiff dance over the waves with a speed which soon distanced her pursuer. He, on the other hand, waxing fiercer and fiercer, compelled the heavy and sullen boat which he sculled to plunge through the water with a rapidity that would have seemed marvellous in ordinary circumstances. They were soon so far at sea, that the peculiarities of the coast could hardly be distinguished.

Letournois at length lay upon his oar, and was just about to abandon the hopeless chase, when Matilde

suddenly became faint; the oars dropped from her hands, she sank back upon the beams, and the light skiff pursued her way upon the waters, so far as the impetus she had received carried her, without farther aid or direction.

“ Another pull ! ” muttered Letournois between his clenched teeth ; and, mustering his remaining energies, he bounded again along the deep. He had just overtaken the skiff—an oar’s length more, and he would have been alongside—when Matilde, rising hastily, seized the oars, and recommenced her flight. So feeble, however, did she appear, that, even favoured as she was by the comparative lightness of the vessel, her escape seemed almost a miracle. Her pursuer was sometimes so near, that, had he stood forward instead of in the stern, he might have grasped the rudder of the fugitive ; and once, as this idea occurred to himself, he threw down his oar, and sprang along the beams with an impetuosity which had nearly thrown him over the bows into the water. Loud and shrill laughed Matilde at his disappointment ; and as her maniacal shrieks leaped along the water, he looked round in sudden terror, and saw that the land had totally disappeared.

Letournois became desperate. The warm sweat suddenly froze upon his brow, or trickled down in drops so cold as to make him shudder. His senses began to wander. He sometimes imagined that Matilde must receive supernatural assistance ; and he even persuaded himself that he saw at one oar the shadowy figure of Aignan Lecomte, while his mistress pulled at

the other. His voice broke forth in a shout, half of cursing, half of deprecation, and was replied to by the wild laughter of Matilde, who seemed to derive a strange enjoyment from the excitement of the chase.

A sail at length appeared in sight. Letournois awoke to the realities of his situation; and Matilde, as if losing all hope of escape, relaxed gradually in her exertions, and at length suffered the oars to drop from her hands. She sunk upon the gunwale; the small vessel dipped to the water's edge; her head, then her shoulders, then her entire bust, were overboard; in vain she tried to save herself—as the headlong bark of her pursuer dashed against hers, the shock threw her wholly into the water, and she was just disappearing below the surface when Letournois grasped her by the hair.

Bounding upward, at that moment, like a spirit of the sea, she returned the grasp of love with one of death. Clasping her arms round the neck of her victim, she dragged him into the abyss; and as the two vessels drifted away to different points of the compass, the yells of insane triumph which she screamed in his ear appalled him still more than the real terrors of his situation. A powerful man, however, and a good swimmer, he struggled long and hard for life. He tore and buffeted in his desperation that form on which his eyes had hitherto dwelt in passionate delight; but even after he had stifled her unearthly shrieks in the wave, he found it impossible to unloose her arms from his neck.

The ship he had seen, and to which he had looked

as his only hope of salvation, at length reached the spot. The two empty boats, however, alone remained to tell of the struggle; and she sailed majestically over the desert waters, the surface of which was unruffled by the death-struggles of Letournois, who writhed drowning beneath.

## CHAPTER III.

## FORTUNES AND FOLLIES OF HARFLEUR.

THE view from the principal pier at Havre is perhaps one of the finest in the world obtained so near the level of the sea. The vast lake of the Seine, which we have described as terminating at Quillebœuf, is seen, in all its beautiful and magnificent details, to the left; directly opposite, Honfleur, surmounted by the hill of Notre Dame de Grace, is niched in the wooded shore; and on the right, the eye loses itself in the immensity of the ocean.

After enjoying this spectacle, let the traveller proceed to the promontory of the Hève, where two light-towers were constructed by Louis XV. to correspond with those of Ailley and Barfleur. After climbing the rock, he will reach the summit of one of the towers by means of a stair of more than a hundred steps; and from this elevation—three hundred and eighty-five feet above the level of the sea—he will contemplate the scene from which he has so lately withdrawn his eye, with changed feelings. The view has expanded to an extent which at once delights and oppresses the soul. The Seine is no longer a lake, but a mighty river, whose windings are lost in the distance; and the eye wanders beyond the hills of Honfleur (which before shut



in the prospect), tracing the line of the Norman coast to a distance of fifty miles as the crow flies, where at length the *falaise* of Barfleur rests like a film on the horizon.

There landed our English Edward (of fatal memory for France), to dispute the throne with Philippe de Valois on his own ground, and overthrow the French army at l'Ecluse. There, if you withdraw your eye slowly along the line of coast, is the Hogue, where, landing again, he led his victorious islanders to the field of Crecy. Nearer still is the spire of Formigny, where Charles VII.—he who was saved by the enthusiasm of one woman, and regenerated by the love of another—struck the decisive blow at the dominion of the English in Normandy. Now commences the long line of the Rocks of Calvados, with a gulf between them and the land, where one of the ships of the famous Armada perished in what is called to this day the Grave of Spain. There is the bay of Coleville, where a single Norman, on a foggy night, routed two invading squadrons of English with the sound of an old drum.\* Now comes the embouchure of the Dive, where the banner of the Three Leopards went forth on its career of conquest.† And, finally, our eyes rest on the great sand-banks of Honfleur, which seem destined to destroy eventually one of the finest rivers in the world.

\* See the History of Monsieur Cabieux, in "Heath's Picturesque Annual, 1834."

† The ensign of Normandy, raised by William the Conqueror at the entrance of this little river, when he embarked on his wonderful enterprise.



The vignette at the beginning of this volume conveys an accurate idea of the situation of the light-towers of the Hève; but even the pencil of Turner would find it impossible to describe the view they afford.

From the heights of Ingouville, where the English colonists principally reside, the view also is admirable; and there M. Casimir Delavigne, a native of the place, was betrayed by his enthusiasm into the exclamation —

“Après Constantinople, il n’est rien de plus beau !”

For our part, we know nothing as yet about Constantinople; and we are not inclined to take the word of a poet, that it presents any thing half so beautiful as the embouchure of the Seine.

Leaving Havre behind us, we leave behind the triumph of honour, genius, and industry, and enter a domain where nature asserts a fatal sovereignty.

The village of Eure, to the east of the fortifications, seated among fertile fields and clumps of trees, looks like the abode of ease and content; but the bloodless faces and languid motions of the inhabitants tell another tale. The sea and the south-west wind are the masters of this portion of the coast to the Point of the Hoc; and they still threaten to destroy even the vestiges of the works of man.

The opposite engraving conveys a good idea of this unwholesome but beautiful flat. The view is taken from the heights of Graville, near the road to Harfleur; and the buildings on the left comprise the remains of the old church and monastery erected over the bones

of the virgin-martyr St. Honoria. This holy person was disturbed from her repose in the monastery of Conflans by the appearance of the Norman pirates in the Seine. The monks fled with every thing they considered likely to tempt the cupidity of the wild men of the north, and, among other precious property, very prudently carried off the bones of St. Honoria.

Pausing to take breath at Graville, they were at length induced to deposit permanently there the sacred treasure ; and the consequence was, that the spot very soon became the rendezvous of a crowd of pilgrims, attracted by the miracles wrought continually by the relics. The martyr having preserved so miraculously her own bones from captivity, was naturally disposed to take a warmer interest in captives than in sufferers of any other description ; and, accordingly, it was only necessary for a prisoner of war to invoke her name, in order to break his fetters.

The great popularity of the saint, however, ended in attracting the envy of the diocese of Paris, which, after a lapse of several centuries, had the cruelty and injustice to demand that the bones which had found so hospitable an asylum should be returned to their care. It was in vain to argue. The residence of St. Honoria at Graville, according to the rapacious Parisians, was nothing more than a visit ; the Normans had given up war and pillage, and taken to the trade of grazing cattle and brewing cider ; and, since the exigency of the time had passed by, it was only proper that the saint should return to her natural diocese.

The people of Graville consented with a heavy heart ;



Engraved by R. D. Smith



but, behold, a new miracle was operated in their favour. The saint, although absent in the bones, remained present in the spirit; prayers, and, above all, *gifts*, were still offered to the empty sarcophagus; and at length the family of Mallet of Graville established a troop of canons in the temple, who remained there till the revolution. The saint, on her part, was grateful for the gratitude of her adorers; and when prisoners of war were scarce, did not scruple to employ herself in curing deafness. The pilgrim who was troubled with this malady, merely inserted his head through a circular hole in the wall, and looking down into the sarcophagus, straightway heard a noise resembling the murmur of the sea, and was instantaneously cured. The curé of Graville latterly caused this aperture to be filled up,—probably because the disease had been wholly eradicated.

In the ninth century, the sea, forming a fine bay, rose to the front of the hill, entirely covering the plain represented in the view. Although the bay is now a tract of fertile land, it is said that great iron rings have been seen in some ruined walls near Graville, which were used some centuries ago for mooring vessels. The ruins are the remains of a very ancient fortress, which protected the barks of the Scandinavians, and which was not entirely demolished sixty years ago.

One of the above-mentioned family of Mallet lost his head for espousing the cause of Charles the Bad, king of Navarre, against King John of France; and his son is the hero of an adventure related with great *naïveté* by Froissart. This William of Graville, in order



to avenge his father's death, determined to deliver into the hands of the adherents of Navarre the château of Evreux, then an important point ; and the method he took displayed equal patience and boldness.

The governor, Oudart, was a man of a cold, phlegmatic disposition, who was never, by any accident, off his post, rarely quitting the exterior wicket of the fortress. He one day observed from the walls a gentleman lounging lazily on the esplanade, and looked at him for a moment ; the next day his attention was attracted in the same manner ; and the next, and the next : till at length, Oudart, a man made up of habit, would have felt a positive inconvenience from missing a sight of the stranger. Sometimes this idler would make a remark as he lounged along ; and sometimes the governor himself would speak first : till, in process of time, attracted as if by some chemical affinity, they began to fancy themselves acquainted.

One day, as the stranger passed, the governor stood at the outer wicket, and they pulled off their hats to one another with great civility. The stranger soon began to talk of the news of the country ; and the governor, who rarely heard any thing, listened with something like interest. His attention, however, was still more strongly excited by a remark which fell accidentally from his gossiping companion : “ And by the same token,” said he, “ when my friend sent me this news, he sent me along with it the most capital chess-board in the world.” Now, chess happened just to be the thing that Oudart liked best upon earth. It is the very game for a dull, drowsy, dreaming man, who bestows as much



empty thought and idle patience upon the movements of his little pieces of bone, as if their progress involved the fate of a kingdom. He inquired eagerly as to the form of the chess-board, and argued stoutly on the details of the game; till, at length, the stranger—an enthusiast like himself—proposed that they should send for the materials, and try their skill forthwith.

His servant happened to be within call, and was accordingly despatched into the town close by, with the governor's hearty consent; and the stranger, in the meantime, suggested that they should go in and prepare the scene for the engagement. Oudart was very willing; and his companion, out of good breeding, complied with his polite desire, by entering first. He then turned round, and seeing the governor stoop his head as he passed under the wicket, William de Graville—for it was he—struck him with a small hatchet, “*tellement qu’il le pourfendit jusques aux dents, et l’abattit mort à ses pieds.*” The chess-men then made their appearance in the form of Navarrian warriors, and took the castle at one move.

At the port of Eure, where there now stands a farm-house, there was formerly a chapel, built, in the year 1294, on the edge of the sea, and dedicated to Notre Dame des Neiges. The anchorage at the bottom of the walls was chiefly frequented by small vessels loaded with glass, the feudal duty on which was exacted in rather an odd manner. The merchant was required to present one of the largest of his glasses to the provost, who in turn filled it with wine, which he gave him to drink. If the custom-payer was able to

swallow the beverage without drawing breath, it was all very well—he returned the empty glass, and the affair was over ; but if unfortunately he paused in the draught, either to enjoy its flavour or to digest his disgust, he was obliged to pay *two* glasses. It is said that mariners in general consented at once to pay the second glass rather than drink the provost's wine.

This antique port is now filled up by the sands washed continually by the action of the tide from the Point of the Hoc. It was here that, in the middle of the seventeenth century, a seventy-gun ship called the Rouen was lost in the quick-sands. There are persons now living who remember seeing the end of one of her masts above the surface of the water.

The chapel of Notre Dame des Neiges stood formerly on an island, although there is now not the slightest trace of any separation from the rest of the land ; but when the traveller has reached the further side of the Point, the changes that have taken place in the aspect of the coast are on a scale so great as to strike him with awe. While wandering along the embouchure of the little river Lézarde, in vain he endeavours to discover the roads where the navy of our Henry V. once floated in triumph. He ascends the beautiful and quiet stream, in search of the place which Monstrelet calls “ le souverain port de Normandie,” and arrives at length at a small, neat *inland* town, without harbour, without fortifications, and surrounded with rich pastures instead of basins, filled with grazing cattle instead of ships. This is Harfleur.

Harfleur was once the Havre of the Seine. The mer-

chant-ships of Spain and Portugal delivered there their cargoes free of duty ; and, besides being a great *entrepôt* of commerce, its home manufactures, particularly of cloth, were held in great estimation. So late as the beginning of the sixteenth century the ships of Harfleur sailed beyond the tropics !

The similarity of the names, and a verbal mistake of Froissart, have led almost all authors to confound this place, in its early history, with Barfleur. The old chronicler, in describing a descent of the English in 1346, says distinctly enough :—

“ Et tant allèrent (the English) qu'ils vindrent à un bon port de mer et une forte ville qu'on clame *Herfleu*, et les conquèrent tantôt ; car les bourgeois se rendirent pour doute de mort ; mais pour ce ne demoura mie que toute la ville ne fut robée, et prins or et argent, et chers ioyaux.”

All this, however, must apply to *Barfleur*, on the coast of the Norman peninsula ; for the same writer says, in the first line of the chapter, “ Quand la nave du Roi d'Angleterre eut prins terre en *la Hogue*,” &c. ; and afterwards, “ Et allèrent tant qu'ils vindrent à une bonne ville, grosse et riche, qui s'appelle *Cherbourg*.” The error here is evident enough ; but what shall we say to M. de St. Amand, in his “ *Lettres d'un Voyageur à l'Embouchure de la Seine*,” who, although aware of the seeming difficulty, gravely describes the shipwreck of the son of Henry I., in 1120, as taking place at Harfleur ; the vessel, immediately after leaving this part of the Seine, striking on the *Raz de Catteville*—a rock at the extreme point of the Cotentin !

At the beginning of the fifteenth century the decline of Harfleur began to take place. In the year 1415, Henry V. of England disembarked close to its walls, and besieged the town during forty days; when food and ammunition failing the garrison, at one moment it surrendered to an army of thirty thousand men. Henry, transported with this success, vowed to erect a temple to God on the site of the humble church of Harfleur, worthy of his name; and, in the meantime, pillaging of their property sixteen hundred families of the inhabitants, he sent them prisoners to Calais. The temple was erected —

“ C’est le clocher d’Harfleur, debout pour nous apprendre  
Que l’Anglais l’a bâti, mais ne l’a su défendre ! ”\*

Twenty years after, a body of one hundred and four of the citizens, rising suddenly, massacred the English garrison, and retook the town. In memory of this deed, it was long the custom at Harfleur — now forgotten — to strike one hundred and four blows on the great bell of the church every morning at daybreak, the hour of the attack.

In 1440, this unhappy town again fell into the hands of the “ natural enemies ” of France; and nine years after was again retaken, by Charles VII. in person, “ sa salade sur la tête,” as Monstrelet says, “ et son pavois en main.” By this time it was no longer of importance as a maritime town. Its ships, denied access to their parent port by the sands, carried

\* Casimir Delavigne, — Prologue for the opening of the Havre theatre.





Engraved by J. Cosen.

Engraved by J. Cosen.





their wealth elsewhere ; by and by Havre arose almost by its side ; the religious wars of 1562 paralysed its remaining industry ; and in 1685, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by scattering abroad the only part of the population worth retaining, completed a calamity from which it has never recovered to this day. In the opposite view the reader will see Harfleur as it now stands, with its little river hardly able to float a fishing-wherry, and its tall white spire looking like a monument to its departed glory.

The procession of the Saw of Harfleur is an absurdity which has descended even to our sensible times ; and it is supposed to date from the conquest of the English. An association, formed at that epoch by the knights of the district for their mutual protection, was the nucleus ; but after chivalry had become nothing more than a memory, some wise persons, at the commencement of the sixteenth century, bethought themselves of reviving the customs of the olden time. The governor of the town was the patron of the new society ; and its name was derived from his family arms — a *saw*. The members swore on this instrument to observe the rules of the association ; and each, on his admission, kissed the rugged steel in ratification of the oath. On Shrove Tuesday, the procession of the Saw, preceded by clarions and trumpets, sets out on horseback from Harfleur, and marches upon Havre, every one vying with his neighbour in the grotesqueness of his appearance. The *cortège* is admitted into the town in due form, the reply to the *qui vive?* of the guard being “ *Folies d'Harfleur!*” The mysterious saw is carried, with much noise and

ceremony, to the citadel ; when, on being presented to the military authorities, a small sum of money is given to the bearers to drink. At the Hôtel de Ville the same scene is repeated ; and the procession, after having made the tour of the town, returns to Harfleur.

Now commences the *morality* of the sport. The worthy sawyers of Harfleur, before sitting down to the banquet prepared for them, proceed in a body to the house of some person renowned in the place for conjugal unpoliteness. The trumpets and clarions cease ; a dreadful silence reigns for some time, and is only interrupted by the sound of loud and solemn knocking at the door of the unhappy man. When, at length, he appears, trembling and conscience-stricken, he is addressed by two of the society, whose features are concealed by masks, and admonished to preserve in his house the *bâton friseur* till some husband is found still guiltier than he ! A shout from the assembled populace terminates the lecture ; and the actors in this important ceremony proceed to their rendezvous, to indemnify themselves for the grave labours of the day by an evening of mirth and festivity.

This folly has been classed with the various Festivals of Fools which served to relieve the solemnity of the Catholic *régime* ; but in reality it has nothing whatever in common with those saturnalia of the slaves of superstition. It does not get tipsy at the expense of the church, but of the state ; and, instead of turning into ridicule holy things and holy men, it takes into question only the misdeeds of such husbands as are guilty of the impropriety of beating their wives. In this respect it

ranks with the *Mère Folle* of Dijon, otherwise called the *Infanterie Dijonaise*. The banner of this procession represented not a saw, but a fool's bauble, with the capital legend —

“ Le monde est plein de fous, et qui n'en veut point voir,  
Doit se tenir tout seul, et casser son miroir.”

When any oddity took place in the town, such as an ill-assorted marriage, or a ridiculous love-suit, the “infantry” were called out; and, a person being dressed so as to resemble exactly the offending party, they pursued him in procession through the streets with loud shouts.

“ We do not perform these things,” say they, “ seriously — but only in sport, to the end that our natural folly may thus escape at least once a year. A wine-barrel would burst if you did not occasionally draw the bung to let out the gas; and, for the same reason, we devote some days to buffoonery, in order that we may return afterwards with more pleasure and savour to the study and exercise of religion.”\*

Taking leave of the ci-devant port of Harfleur, we pursue our solitary walk along the banks of the Seine. The first object which attracts our attention, on approaching again the water's edge, is the château d'Orcher, perched on the summit of a steep falaise. It is a heavy and clumsy pile of building, erected on the spot where an ancient fortress once commanded the entrance of the river. From its lofty situation it is a

\* Dutilliat, Mémoires pour servir à la Fête des Fous.

very remarkable object at sea, and serves as a beacon to vessels coming to anchor in the roads of Havre for the purpose of waiting the tide. After enjoying a prospect which must be thought remarkable by those who have never stood on the heights of Ingouville, or on the light-towers of the Hève, we wind our way down the steep through rocks and trees, and, arrived near the bottom, examine with some curiosity a spring said to possess the virtue—or rather the vice—of petrifying any object immersed in its waters. In this case, however, the report goes beyond the truth; for, although sufficiently curious, the spring does not petrify, but merely incrusts with a kind of marl the substance exposed to its action, so as to give it the appearance of stone. In some places the moss through which the water trickles sustains a similar operation, and presents a specimen of filigree-work more beautiful and delicate than was ever produced by the workmanship of man.

Pursuing the line of falaises, which hitherto border almost uniformly the banks of the river, we traverse the lands of Oudales, the vineyards of which were in considerable repute at the time when the Pays du Caux was a wine country, and arrive at a spot which presents a spectacle so remarkable as to detain our steps for a considerable time.

From the summit of a rock, called the Pierre Géante, we see the whole course of the river, from Honfleur on the right to Caudebec on the left; but our eye retires from the majestic spectacle to rest on a single object at our feet.

The remains of the ancient château of Tancarville rank among the most striking monuments of the feudal ages in France. In fact, while gazing at the shadow of by-gone magnificence, we are apt to think that all history must be a dream, and that, instead of the rude barons of the middle ages, the lords of such a structure must have been the true knights of romance. The local point of these fortresses seems to have been chosen on a general principle; for the description of that of Tancarville will apply to almost all those situated on the banks of a river. In the “*Histoire des Français des divers Etats*,” while reading of the feudal château of Montbason, we have only to substitute the Seine for the Indre, in order to obtain a complete idea of the picture now before us.

“Represent to yourself, in the first place,” says M. Monteil, “a superb position—a steep hill, bristled with rocks, and furrowed with ravines and precipices: there stands the château. The little houses near it increase its magnitude by comparison; the Indre seems to swerve in its course out of respect, and makes a wide semicircle at its feet.”

The ditches of Tancarville are now without water, and the courts covered with grass, and the cavern-like windows broken in fragments; but we see enough to recall the idea of Saint Pierre, suggested by a neighbouring manor: “When I recollect that this structure was formerly the abode of petty tyrants, who there exercised their bandit-trade not only on their own vassals but on travellers, *I think I see the carcass and bones of some huge wild beast.*”



The château of Tancarville belonged to the chamberlains of the Duke of Normandy ; but it occupies no space in the political chronicles of the time. The great names of French chivalry are sometimes mentioned in connexion with its walls ; but they pass by like a troop of shadows. Of these are Melun, Montgommeri, Dunois, Longueville, and Montmorenci. Raoul de Tancarville was governor to William the Conqueror ; and one of the counts of the name was taken prisoner at Poitiers, and died at Azincourt. So much for history ; but its legends of chivalry and religion are not so scanty.

Some particulars of a private war between the Chamberlain de Tancarville and the Sire de Harcourt are given in the “ *Croniques de Normandie*,” and, although often quoted by the French writers, throw so curious a light upon the manners of the times, that we shall venture to translate the passage.

“ In the time of King Philip le Bel, after the Knight of the Green Lion had conquered the King of Arragon, there arose a fierce dissension between two great barons of Normandy, that is to say, the Sire de Harcourt and the Chamberlain de Tancarville, on the subject of a mill, the property of which they disputed with each other. The Tort de Harcourt” (so called on account of a natural deformity) “ fell upon the people of the said chamberlain, wounded and defeated them, and took possession of the mill by force. Whereupon the chamberlain immediately summoned his men, and, at the head of a company three hundred strong, arrived at Lillebonne, where were the Sire de Harcourt and the Tort, his brother. The chamberlain shouted against





Engraved by R. A. Pearson

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them reproaches and defiance, to which the Sire de Harcourt, in his turn, gave the lie ; and having gone forth to the barriers with all his men, he gave them battle stoutly, and some were slain on both sides.

“ When the king heard of this disorder, he sent the Messire Enguerrand de Marigny to summon them to appear before him ; but on the way to court, it happened that the Sire de Harcourt met the chamberlain, and falling upon him unawares, struck out his left eye with the finger of his gauntlet, and so returned home. When the chamberlain was cured, he went to the king, and demanded battle against the said Lord of Harcourt ; which coming to the ears of Monsieur Charles de Valois, the king’s brother, who loved much the Sire de Harcourt, he pledged his faith to him, and hastened to court. Messire Enguerrand de Marigny, grand-counsellor of the king, declared that the Sire de Harcourt had been guilty of treachery ; Monsieur Charles said, nay ; and Messire Enguerrand gave Monsieur Charles the lie : for the which he paid so dear that he was thereupon hung, notwithstanding his quality.

“ The battle was decreed, and the Sire de Harcourt came into the field armed with fleurs de lys ; and the two barons fought very proudly. The King of England and the King of Navarre, who were then present, at length begged the King of France to put an end to the combat ; saying it was pity two such valiant men should destroy one another. Whereupon the King of France cried “ Ho ! ” and both parties being satisfied, peace was made between them by the said king, about the year thirteen hundred.”

The right of private wars, so universally assumed by the nobles, was *legal* in the true sense of the word. It commenced in the decline of the empire of Charlemagne ; and when the great barons tacitly submitted to a new dynasty, begun in the person of Hugh Capet, they did not for a moment dream of abandoning one of their privileges. They attached, indeed, so little importance to the title or office of king, that the principal cause of their submission was indifference : they did not a whit the less consider themselves the equal of the new monarch ; and one day, when Hugh sent in anger to one of his rebellious lords with the demand, “ Who made thee a count ? ” he received the counter-question, “ Who made thee a king ? ”

These wars were at first of infinite disadvantage to the state ; for a baron, who considered that his own individual interest should take precedence of every thing, did not scruple to pursue his private quarrels even when summoned to the field by his prince. In the course of time, however, there were rules adopted which at least lessened the mischiefs of the system. A general war, for instance, extinguished, during its continuance, the private wars ; and the relations of the family, before implicated to the seventh degree, were only obliged to take a part in the feud to the third degree. In the case of the Lords of Harcourt and Tancarville, we have seen that both parties ran to arms without the smallest form of preliminary ; but a century later, a declaration of war would have been necessary, and after that a delay of fifteen days, to afford time for concession.

As for the wager of battle, it was duly authorised by law, and has been at various times the subject of legislation. In the year 1168, Louis VII. forbade the duel when the matter in contest did not amount to more than five sous !\* In 1205 Philippe-Auguste regulated the length of the club with which villeins knocked one another to pieces in form of law. This weapon was to be three feet long ; but such persons were forbidden the use of the knightly sword or lance. If a noble called a villein into the field, both parties fought with clubs ; but if the villein was the appellant, he alone used the weapon of his caste, while his enemy was permitted to ride into the lists armed cap-à-pie. In the latter case, the pedestrian was of course trampled to the ground at once, and was then hung without ceremony.

In 1260 Saint Louis at length abolished the wager of battle in civil matters ; but the law authorising public duels on other grounds was in force under Francis I., since this royal knight-errant was so eager to call out the Emperor Charles V. They were afterwards abolished by his son Henri II., when his favourite Châteignerai was killed in single combat by Jarnac ; but this decree was of no effect, and the subsequent law of Charles IX. (the monster of Saint Bartholomew), prohibiting all duels under pain of death, was never executed, and its very existence was speedily forgotten.

In judicial combats each party had a second, called an *avocat*, whose province it was to fix the preliminaries

\* “ Por dette de cinq sols et de moins, se elle est niée, ne soit bataille ja entre deux gens.”



of the battle, and, if this was possible, to arrange the quarrel without bloodshed. If a gentleman approached the lists immediately after the duel had commenced, his horse was confiscated; a bourgeois, or villein, under the same circumstances, had his ear cut off. The appellant was always expected to enter the arena armed as he meant to fight; and if by accident he wore his vizor up, he was compelled to allow it to remain so during the combat. Women and minors fought by proxy; and if defeated, the proxies lost their hands, and the principals their heads.

The practice of private duels grew naturally out of that of judicial combats; but, like the private wars of earlier times, they were never authorised by any express law. In the sixteenth century, this abuse came to so absurd a height, that treatises were written and studied to establish the point of honour, even regarding a glance of the eye or the tone of the voice. The duel sometimes took place on horseback, the parties sitting in their saddles *in their shirts*; but this custom gave way, and the combatants were not only fully dressed, but the collars of their coats were stuffed with flowers. The weapon was frequently the pistol, which their descendants have now given almost entirely up to the English.

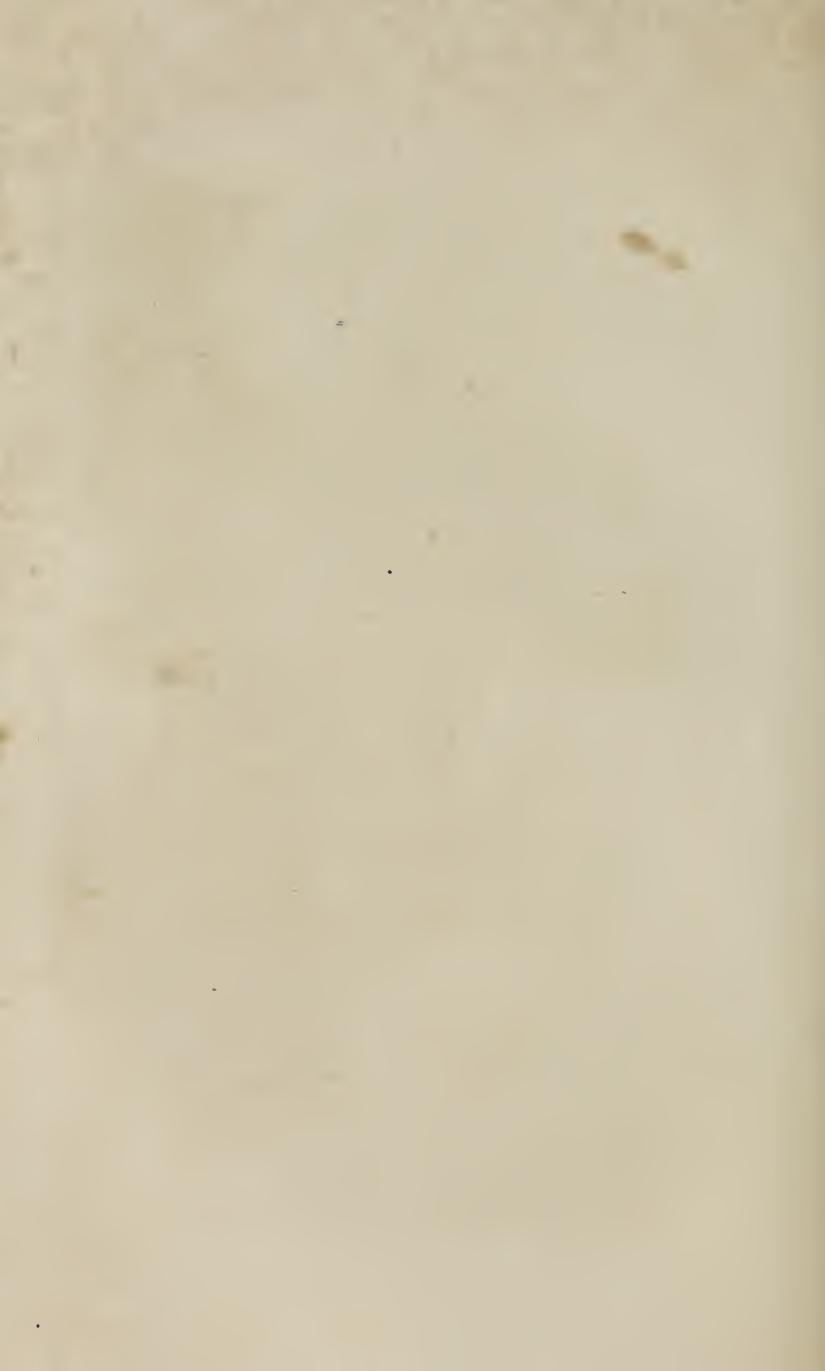
To ask a man to be second in a duel was to confer a great favour on him, although it sometimes cost him his life; for the seconds fought as well as the principals. Sometimes there were two seconds, and sometimes as many as *nine*, all fighting at the same moment like so many devils.

But having thus sketched the history of the duel,





Engraved by J. T. Wellhouse



we must not forget to add the result of that of the Lords of Harcourt and Tancarville, whose quarrel had cost the eye of a chamberlain, the neck of a grand counsellor, and the lives of some individuals of less note. *The Sire de Harcourt was fined fifty livres.*

The engraving represents the Château de Tancarville, seen in that kind of spectral light which Turner has the art of throwing over his ruins. A portion of the building is comparatively new, having been built by the celebrated projector Law, who, immediately after he had bought the property for eight hundred thousand francs, was obliged to fly the kingdom.

Has the English house of Tankerville any connexion with this celebrated château? The question interests us—and why? because we have just read the following lines in the “Court Journal.” We have never, to our knowledge, seen the lady alluded to, and, for the sake of our soul’s peace, we pray Heaven we never may!

“No longer glowing gay as morning light—

No longer changeful as the summer breeze—

As when, in Chiswick’s garden of delight,

All hearts, all hopes, were with the young CORISE!

No longer vivid with a noontide glare,

As when in Carlton halls her beauty shone,

And, mid the galaxy that sparkled there,

All eyes were on the brilliant OSSULSTON!

But graceful with each grace the world can grant,

Or the high blood of Grammont’s race instil;

With smiles that win, and glances that enchant,

Refinement’s self is seen in TANKERVILLE.”

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE WANDERER'S REVERIE.

“Come and see

The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way  
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples !

\* \* \* \* \*

Cypress and ivy, weed and wall-flower, grown,  
Matted, and massed together, hillocks heaped  
On what were chambers, arch crushed, column strewn  
In fragments, choked-up vaults, and frescos steeped  
In subterranean damp, where the owl peeped,  
Deeming it midnight.”

THE earth is covered with ruins, piled themselves upon the ruins of an earlier age; the atmosphere is thick with the shadows of history; our ear is filled with the hum of perished nations. After a walk of only two leagues from Tancarville, we are still untired; but the disc of the sun has disappeared beneath the horizon, and the stillness of the hour, and the dusky tints of the sky, invite the body to repose, while they awaken the mind to more vigorous life. Seated on a moss-covered stone, beetling over the brow of a hill, we gaze into a rich and profound valley, where the shadows of twilight are already deepening into gloom. What strange pageant is this which passes before our vision? Do we see with the eye of the senses or that of the spirit?

Creeping along the bottom of the valley, weary and slow, there first appear some uncouth yet indefinite forms, their sandals soiled with the travel of years, and their backs laden with the pledges of their pilgrim-love, desert-born. Troop after troop they come, perchance from the land of Egypt, or from the mountains of the Caucasus, or from farther India. They look around them in the shadowy valley; some climb the steeps, and some fling themselves on the earth, exhausted. But finally they gather in a group, in the middle; and straightway rude dwellings arise on the solitary spot, and the wanderers sit down as in an abiding place and a continuing city.

A voice in the valley! It is the sound of prayer and worshipping. The sun when it shines, and the moon walking in brightness, are their visible deities; and they go up to the high places of their rocks (like those of old Phœnicia), to meet the stars as they come trooping over the hill. But after a time they are seized with fear, if their gods are unseen in the sky; and they look round, quaking, in search of relief from the indefinite dread, which sits like the night-hag on their souls. And then some old men arise from among them—old men with white heads, and lofty brows, and deep bright eyes—and go apart from the sons and daughters of their people. And the men of the city of huts follow them afar off, and the old men minister between them and the invisible deities of the world. On the tops of mountains, or in the depths of forests, they build edifices of unhewn stones, in shape like the sun, or like the moon when it is full; and, at their call,

the deities descend invisibly from their sphere to inhabit the temples appointed for them. Then a deeper dread seizes upon the people; the whole world becomes a mystery; they read prophecies in the starry heavens, and hear, as of old, the voice of the Lord God among the trees. And they bow down before their priests, and beat their foreheads upon the ground; and the father offers up the first-born as a blood-offering, and the mother tears the lips of her infant from her full breast, and flings it into the fire of sacrifice.

Clouds in the valley — a sea of tumbling clouds! Darkness in the heavens, and thick darkness on the earth! But a mighty wind at length arises in the south, and drives before it the rack of the sky, and the shadows of the land. The clash of arms is borne on the gust, and here and there the glitter of steel is seen, like flashes of lightning, through the gloom. A wail ascends from the valley! The city of huts is on fire! and as the flames sink and disappear at intervals, a hissing sound is heard from the embers. Through the smoke and fire are seen the forms of another race, steel-clad, and terrible in their aspect, like the gods when they warred with men. As the chaos disappears, we see towers and temples rising from the ruins of the huts; a vast fortress guards the new city, and highways, fit for the tread of giants, radiate from a spot which might seem the centre of the world. The masters of the valley laugh at the old altars of Teutates, yet adore the god, recognising his identity with their own Mercurius, with Hermes, Thoth, and the early deity of every nation their arms had subdued. Their



own heaven, however, is more capacious. Their pantheon comprehends all nature, both moral and physical, separated in its various forms and attributes; every phenomenon affording a myth; every element, every passion, every class of objects recognisable by the senses individualised into a god; every god represented by a symbol. They worship every virtue, every vice, every sentiment—peace, war, death, and hell—the angels and the furies—trees, stones, and rivers—voices, and the echoes of a voice. They divide the universe of mind and matter into its component atoms, and every atom is a god.

Mirth in the valley! Mirth and laughter, with shrieks between—the shrieks of the victim and the slave. The altars are strewn with flowers, sprinkled with wine and tears, and perfumed with incense mingled with sighs. The clash of cymbals is heard instead of the clash of swords; the helmet is thrown aside for the garland; processions take place of marches; and the thirsty eagle of Rome, once gorged with blood, is now drunken with wine.

Chaos again in the valley!—rebellion, and treachery, and strife, and struggling; and in the midst a still small voice proclaiming peace on earth, and good-will to men! Again there is the sound of marching, and the voice of war, and the hissing of flame, and the gush of blood. The eyes of the old eagle are dim with voluptuousness, and his limbs enervated with debauchery. The Cross is raised as the standard at once of religion and revolt; it proclaims the equality of men in the sight of God; and the cry goes forth—“Where

the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty!" The old altars are overthrown; the statues of marble, and of gold, and of silver, are broken to pieces; the barbarians who had stood at the frontiers of the empire, gazing in as at a wonder and a show, now crowd into the centre; the oppressed, the discontented, the ambitious, and the devout,—all form different parties in the state; the prestige vanishes like a dream which encompassed the old Roman name; and, vanquished at once by effeminacy, treachery, true religion, and the sword, the empire falls!

Darkness again in the valley! Amidst storms and earthquakes, a bold and warlike, but savage race build their rude fortresses among the palaces of the Cæsars. Soon the clouds are dispelled, and the tempest hushed; and the golden sceptre of Charlemagne, stretched from horizon to horizon, looks like a rainbow in the heavens. The old temples, however, are upreared anew; sacrifices are still offered, but of treasure instead of blood; and gods of stone worshipped as before, but under the name of saints. The new idolaters surpass in profanity even the Hindoos, for they represent Brahma himself, or the Supreme, in their simulacra; but, unlike them, they never pray to him, contenting themselves with the meaner deities of the Christian mythology.\*

\* The Emperor Constantine decreed the public exercise of the Christian religion in the year 325. This was a proof of the weakness of despotism; and the bishops were not slow in taking advantage of circumstances, so as to throw off altogether the yoke of civil jurisdiction. Immediately after the conquest of Gaul by the Franks, under Clovis, the priestly order seems to have been still higher than that of the nobles;

Again, a sound of terror and of woe, and the scene once more changes in the valley! The descendants of the aborigines, of the Gauls, of the Romans, and of the Franks, fly shrieking from their homes; whence, in turn, the flames rise, roaring to the heavens, and then sink, quenched in blood and tears. The new invaders are wild men of the north—robbers of the ocean, led forth from the shores of the Baltic by their sea-kings, to ravage countries more fertile than their own. Gorged with booty, they at length withdraw; and the inhabitants of the valley return, trembling, to build anew among the smoking ruins of their habitations. The Northmanns appear again—and again—and again; and at last, liking too well a soil which can produce crops of plunder so abundant, they “make a solitude, and call it peace,” and sit quietly down to enjoy the fruits of their rapine.

Softening under the influence of the genial clime, and reformed by the spirit even of an impure Christianity, the wild Normans at length begin to cultivate the fields they had fertilised with blood. We see, by and by, the glancing of knightly arms, the prancing

for, although the nobles were sometimes priests, the priests were always nobles. The usurper Pepin introduced, in 755, the anointment, or consecration, of the kings of France by the prelates of the church; and the pope, in return, called him the New Moses, and the New David. In this reign the Christian priesthood was erected into a separate political order in the state; and, although somewhat checked by Charlemagne, the son of Pepin, it had waxed so marvellously by the time of his grandson, Louis le Débonnaire, that the pope deposed the king, and shut him up in a cell! By the secular rise of the priesthood, we, of course, measure the decline of genuine Christianity.

of the gallant steed, the warrior bending his waving plumes to the feet of beauty; but amidst the song of the minstrel, the swell of the clarion, and the rich laugh of ladies, there mingle by fits the howls of the crushed serf, the sobs of the despoiled orphan, and the shriek of the captive maid. In midst of all, however, there now arises from the ruined palace of the Cæsars a vast and warlike pile, which attracts the eyes of the whole valley, and the fame of which spreads abroad over the world. The lord of the edifice is at once a giant of romance, a demi-god of song, and a hero of history. He knows how to excite, to control, and to direct,—how to fuse, as it were, the minds of men in the mould of his own opinions. The château becomes too small for his huge person; the ducal sceptre too light for his iron hand; the wide realm of Normandy too confined for his boundless spirit. He calls his nobles and warriors around him, and, raising on high the proud and holy banner of the Three Leopards, leads the mighty *cortège* across the seas. At the first blow of the chief, an empire falls; and he seats himself, as if by enchantment, on the throne of a hundred kings.

Once more gloom in the valley!—but the softened gloom of a twilight which follows a glorious day. The greater part of the city crumbles away, stone by stone, till the traveller, striking his staff into the moss that covers some shapeless fragment, inquires,—“ Was this a portion of a Gothic spire, or of a Norman fort, or of a Roman theatre, or of a Gaulic temple?” The palace of the Conqueror has vanished, till conjecture can only point to an enclosure as having belonged to its fortifica-





View of the Bay of Naples, from the Villa of Pausanias, by J. M. W. Turner, Esq. R.S.A.





tions ; and even a new château, raised upon its ruins, is itself a ruin. Some broken walls, some roofless chambers, some crumbling towers,—and these are all. Peasants amuse themselves with their uncouth games in places where it would once have been death for a serf to enter. In the hollow below, a white spire rises in the midst of a few scores of houses, the remains of the fated city ; and, in the distance, the Seine, majestic and beautiful, flows calmly and unswervingly on—like the fate of the human race !

## CHAPTER V.

## LILLEBONNE.

THE next morning, before going forth to visit in detail a place which, judging by the scraps and outlines of its history that had stuck to our memory, we were prepared to find so interesting, we were amused by a little dispute at the breakfast-table. We know not what were the merits of the case, or, in fact, what was the *bone* of contention among the feasters; but the words of a lady, who spoke with some heat, and great volubility, made such an impression upon us, as to turn away for the moment our thoughts from the Gaulic-Roman-Saxon-Norman-French city of Lillebonne.

“Politeness!” exclaimed she, “*French* politeness! what a farce! You may as well talk of French chivalry, or of any thing else that belonged to an earlier age, but which is unknown in ours. The French of to-day are brutes! — low, vulgar, coarse-minded, ill-mannered brutes! They grin and chatter, I grant you, at a woman like so many monkeys; but as for the true respect which is shewn in action, in sacrifice, in endurance and forbearance, they know nothing about it. The cold, phlegmatic Englishman is a thousand times more of a *gentleman*, as he calls it,—a word which has no synonyme in our language, although it resembles the *chevalier* of ancient times. If a woman is in danger

from the rain, whose umbrella, whose cloak, is at her service? The Frenchman's? Trust him! He buttons himself up to the chin with a grimace; while the Englishman, without moving a muscle, strips himself to the waistcoat, if necessary, and sits dripping like a water-god through the shower. If we are to be carried across the dirty road from the door of the diligence, who leads us by the end of the finger, choosing the cleanest place for his own tiptoes? Why, the Frenchman. Who, in the same situation, takes us up in his arms, and stalks, like a statue moved by magic, through the very depths of the mud, that he may land us, without a soil upon the hem of our gown, upon the pavé?—The Englishman, I say. French politeness! bah!"\*

It may be that the historical reference in the lady's speech harmonised with the nature of our thoughts; but, at all events, incongruous as the subjects may seem, we walked forth to view the Juliobona of the Romans, immersed in a reverie upon French politeness.

The fair disputant is right. The character of the French, so far as the male sex is concerned, has changed: they are no longer a polite people. This discovery we must ourselves have made long since unconsciously, without having had the sense to apply it; for no sooner had she spoken, than we felt, from a hundred before-unheeded experiences, that she was right. The sovereignty of the women in France is supported by an ancestral prestige, which is daily

\* If we have not translated her speech, we hope we have at least guessed at the meaning of the fair Havraise, and have thus redeemed a very questionable security—the word of a traveller.

vanishing. The Revolution, which overthrew the crown, shook the empire of beauty to its foundation ; and the affair of July has left her only the memory of vanished greatness, and the shadow of a throne. As for the imperial régime that came between, it was apparently favourable to the falling cause, although really the reverse. The Bonaparte people were parvenus, and clung to all the prestiges of the preceding dynasty with the jealous eagerness of an attorney's wife, who suddenly finds herself, by some hocus-pocus of the law, the squiress and lady of the manor. Had Napoleon been a prince by birth, he would have contented himself with filling the throne of Saint Louis, instead of exaggerating the kingdom into an empire. This *Cockneyism* (universal word !) of the imperial family threw such an air of ridicule upon all their pretensions, that, even when bending before the queens and princesses (titled and untitled) of the house, the imagination, by the mischievous instinct of contrast, associated them with the idea of the mop and the wash-tub. As for the English, every body knows that we are all bulls and bears, and so we have no character to lose ; but, notwithstanding, we are more polite, in the true sense of the word, than the French. Upon that question we will peril life and limb !

Even the external garb of politeness is now almost universally laid aside in France. Formerly, and as late as the sixteenth century, if you met the public executioner on the road, he would mould his features into an expression of the most cordial bonhomie, and exclaim, " God preserve you from my hands !" When

he put the rope round the neck of a criminal on the scaffold, this functionary would not fail to say, "My friend, the king salutes thee!" This, however, was nothing. A salutation was a seigneurial right, and could be sued for at law like any other emolument.

At that time an inferior embraced the knee, the thigh, the boot of his superior, and kissed his hand, his fingers, or a single finger of his hand. With a great lady, the saluter fell upon his knees, and kissed the hem of her gown; and when one lady visited another of equal rank, if the proper ceremony was omitted, the slighted party would say, "Madam, you ought to kiss me by rights!"

On speaking to a high dignitary of the church, it was always necessary to say, *monseigneur*; to a knight, *messire*; to a gentleman, *monsieur*; to a magistrate, *monsieur*, or *monsieur-maitre*; to an advocate, or a physician, *maitre*. The last title was also the right of the public executioner. The wife of a noble or knight was called *madame*; that of a gentleman, an advocate, or a physician, *mademoiselle*; that of a tradesman or artisan, *dame*. It was not till the close of the sixteenth century that the honourable title of *madame* had descended to the ladies of advocates, physicians, and even the higher order of tradesmen—which now, alas! is claimed by every applewoman in the streets.

The word *monsieur*, now so general—applied in common to the crown prince and the *pauvre diable* who begs a sous for the love of God—was, not long ago, thought of some importance. It was cut in two before being conferred upon a bourgeois, who

was called *sieur*; and a distinction was even made between the full title and its component parts in separation — *monsieur*, and *mon sieur*. As for the *tutoiement*, it was long before thought an insult by equals, and a condescension by inferiors; and it is thought that Francis I. would have condemned any body to the scourge who could have been bold enough to have addressed him with the pronouns “thee” or “thou.”

If you sneezed, every body present at the operation bowed, crying “God help you!—God bless you!” when, pulling off your hat, you bowed in return, saying, “Thank you—many thanks!” This custom is still common in the provinces; and on one occasion it amused us very much. A lady—and a young and pretty lady—sneezed, and was complimented in due form by the company, which was chiefly composed of gentlemen. She sneezed again, and the salutation was again performed with much unction. A third time; and some of the polite Frenchmen humphed, and shrugged their shoulders. The fourth repetition was followed by a profound silence; only interrupted by *one* faint and solitary exclamation—“God help you, madam!”

In conversation, it was the custom for an inferior to commence his discourse by asking permission to speak; and a wife, in like manner, (O golden days!) went through the same ceremony with her husband. To say, “That is not true,” or “You lie,” would have been ill manners; but the most polite person might say, “Saving your grace’s presence, that is false,”—or, “Under correction of your displeasure, that is a



lie!" If one contradicted another on the slightest fact or opinion, it was necessary to preface it with a *pardonnez moi*; which in these rude times has dwindled into the familiar dissyllable *pardon*!

At table, the grand difficulty was the system of healths; which we do not attempt to explain, seeing that we ourselves do not comprehend it. It was necessary, however, to follow the old maxim, and "do as you were done by;" which is to say, that (for instance) if any body drank to you *supernaculum*, it was necessary on your part to "rendre rubis sur l'ongle" with equal precision.\* At the end of the repast, a general "choque," or hob-or-nob, took place, in which all the glasses of the guests met with a clash in the middle of the table. It was usual to wash the hands before as well as after the meal; but, till lately, the nasty and disgusting ceremony of publicly rinsing the mouth was unknown both in France and England.

In dancing, the politeness of the French was peculiarly conspicuous. The eyes, the lips, the arms — all were brought into play as well as the feet; and the books of the art, in marking the measure, distinguished also the intervals at which a salute, a bow, a curtsy, or a kiss, was to be performed.

Many of these wholesome and excellent regulations, however, are now dispensed with; and the Frenchman of to-day fancies that, by pulling off his hat on all

\* As this custom, which once *obtained* (what?) in England, is now among the things that were, it is proper to say, that drinking *supernaculum* means draining your glass even to the last drop, which you quaff from your thumb-nail.

occasions, in season and out of season, he obtains a plenary indulgence for his sins against ceremony.

While immersed in such profound and important speculations, our thoughts wandering from the manners of one century to those of the previous one, we found ourselves at length in the earliest ages of the French monarchy; whence the distance was but a step to the time of the domination of the Romans in Gaul. Lillebonne was then the chief city of the Caletes, or inhabitants of what is now called the Pays de Caux; but what was its original name no one knows. Its Roman name of Juliobona was imposed in honour of the founder of the dynasty of the Cæsars, probably during his proconsulate in Gaul;\* and in the days of Ptolemy the geographer, who flourished during the latter half of the second century, it was still the capital of the Caletes. It is mentioned also in the Itinerary of Antonine, and in the map of Peutinger; but a long and dreary period elapses after the classic era, in which Juliobona sleeps in darkness till wrapped in a bloody light by the torches of the marauding pirates of Scandinavia.

The ancient importance of this capital may be conjectured, not only from the ruins of its theatre, but from the Roman roads radiating from it in every direction. One of these, as the Itinerary of Antonine informs

\* Some writers make it Julia Bona, and say that it was named after the fair and frail daughter of Augustus; but the historians of the middle ages, who were at least nearer the epoch than we, are explicit on the point: "*Sed Juliobonam*," says Robert du Mont, "*Julius Cæsar, ex cuius nomine Julia vocatur, condidit, destructa urbe Caleto.*"

us, went to Dreux, another to Evreux, and another to Caudebec, Rouen, and Paris. The last mentioned is still the highway between Rouen and Caudebec. The map of Peutinger also exhibits a Roman way leading from Juliobona towards Boulogne.

The medals of all the early emperors were found in the ruins of the theatre; and in another place a collection of five hundred, omitting the more ancient, and proceeding, with little interruption, from Otho to Probus. This is undoubtedly a curious circumstance; and it derives still more interest from a fact which we have not seen noticed conjunctively, that, about the time of Probus, or immediately after, Juliobona must have fallen from the rank of cities. This is proved by its never having been the see of a bishop.

Near the place where this numismatic hoard was found, there was discovered, in the ruins of a Roman house, a small bronze statue of Hercules, in perfect preservation. On the banks of the little river Lillebonne, and near the gate of the town, the remains of an extensive building were also excavated, the court of which, paved in rustic mosaic, is precious in the eyes of antiquaries. It was on the banks of this river that the stone was quarried which served for the construction of the public buildings of the city. In its natural state below the earth it appears to be soft and moist, and may be taken out in enormous masses; but by a very few hours' exposure to the sun, it becomes as hard as adamant.

The left bank of the Bolbec, which forms the western limit of the town, was also rich in vestiges of the arts

and of domestic architecture. At the southern entrance, from the number of funeral vases discovered, it is supposed that on that spot there must have been a Roman cemetery.

The valley, however, through which the Roman road winds, is more peculiarly holy ground to the explorer of the antique world. There stands the *new* château, broken down with the weight of many hundred years, and built upon the ruins of the Roman Acropolis; the baths, erected probably in the first centuries of the Christian era; and the theatre, the most remarkable monument of the masters of the world in the north of France.

The Roman fortress has perished, with the exception of part of a military wall, at the bottom of which swords of formidable dimensions, and sculptures, apparently anterior to the introduction of Christianity, have been found. The stones are in some cases finely cut; but M. Gaillard has detected an artifice, which at least diminished the labour, if it does not detract from the skill of the Gaulic artists.\* They chose, it seems, such stones as were most spungy and defective, and, of course, most easily cut; and, when their work was finished, dented and roughened the surface with the chisel, and then applied a coating of some kind of cement, occasionally red, but often white and brilliant.

The apartments of the baths are small and oblong, the largest being only thirty feet by eighteen. In one of them a female statue was found as large as life, and

\* The Gauls, under the instruction of their masters, became expert sculptors.

cut in the beautiful marble of Paros. It is thought to represent the wife of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, which would, in some measure, fix the date of the balnearium in the second century.\* Some of the apartments are ornamented with paintings in fresco, and paved with black and gray schistus. The establishment appears to have contained baths for the women as well as for the men; and it has been noticed as something worthy of remark (although we consider it a circumstance of mere accident, from which no conclusion can be drawn), that in the *balnea virilia* there was found a medal of William Rufus, king of England.

Directly facing the hill of the Acropolis, the sides of which are covered with these monuments, and the summit with the château of the middle ages, there is another eminence, on which stands the Roman theatre. The façade of this edifice, which is now wholly destroyed, must have been three hundred and thirty feet long; and the inner circumference of the building, formed by a circular corridor, six hundred and twenty-five feet. One half of the theatre stands in the valley, and the other on the sides of the eminence; but the former part is so far below the level of the modern houses, and of the Roman road, which runs past the façade, that it looks like a vast excavation. It would

\* A wall similar to those erected by the Romans at Narbonne, Périgueux, Bordeaux, and elsewhere, separates the façade from the body of the edifice; whence it is argued that the balnearium must have been more ancient than the fourth century, the date of such erections. If the statue mentioned in the text, however, is really that of Constantine's empress, we have ourselves no doubt (for ignorance is always presumptuous) that the baths were in ruins before the wall was built.



be needless, however, to look for the sites of Roman buildings on the same level with the roads, the latter being, in most cases, built up like a lofty rampart; and in the course of seventeen or eighteen hundred years, it is not wonderful if we should find the ancient soil raised to a great height by vegetable earth alone. In the ruins of the comparatively recent constructions of the middle ages, we are generally obliged to descend as into a vault; the threshold of the doorway being considerably below the surface which belongs to the present denizens of the earth.

Near the theatre a figure of gilded bronze, six feet high, was found in 1823, "apparently," says M. Rever, "a statue of the god Bacchus. It is completely naked; its hair, divided in the middle of the brow, borders the temples, and unites in a knot behind."

The ducal palace of William the Conqueror exists in little more than conjecture; its ruins having been re-erected, towards the twelfth century, into a feudal château, the property of the house of Harcourt, whose feud with that of Tancarville we have noticed above. Here William organised, in 1066, the invasion of England; and here he frequently resided from inclination before his will or destiny called him to a throne.

The constructions within the extensive enclosure are evidently of different epochs; one square tower being of the thirteenth century, and a round tower as late as the fifteenth. The drawbridge, by means of which the latter is attained, is thirty-three feet broad, and thrown over a very deep ditch; the walls are thirteen feet thick, and divided into three stages.





Engraved by J. T. Smith

Printed by W. Lupton, H. A.



“There,” says the author of the “Studies of Nature,” “There arise lofty battlemented towers, with trees growing from the summit like a head-dress. Gothic windows, resembling the entrances of caverns, open at intervals through the ivy. No living thing is seen in this desolate abode, save buzzards flying in silence round the walls; or, if you chance to hear the voice of a bird, it is that of some owl who builds here its hermit-nest. When I remember, in viewing this manor, that it was formerly the abode of petty tyrants, who there exercised their bandit-trade not only on their own vassals but on travellers, I think I see the carcass and bones of some huge wild beast.”

“Alas!” exclaims M. Licquet, “who would recognise here the abode of the most formidable prince of his time? Roofless, floorless, nothing but fragments and ruins! Fern, nettles, and ivy, have usurped the palace of the Norman kings!”

To this Turner adds nothing in words; but behold how eloquent he is! That is a Study of Nature which would have been worthy the pencil of Saint Pierre himself.

## CHAPTER VI.

## SCENERY AND SENTIMENT.

RETURNING to the river-side, from which Lillebonne is distant nearly a league, we wandered on, "thorough brake, thorough brier," for a considerable distance, without meeting with any thing worthy of note, except almost at every step an enchanting peep of the water. We looked out sharply for the "farm" mentioned by the compiler of a clever little guide-book published at Havre, but now out of print. It was invisible, however, to our eyes on the land, although the voyager will be more successful who employs his telescope as he sails up the river.

This "farm" (most vague and unsubstantial substantive!) was rendered illustrious, it seems, by the residence there of a gentleman whose adventure we should be anxious, with more time and space, to inquire into in detail.

In the year 1562, to be brief, when Rouen, in the hands of Montgommeri, was besieged by the Guise party, two lamentable accidents occurred. The King of Navarre was mortally wounded, and Monsieur Civile was struck in the face by a ball, which, passing straight through, re-entered the atmosphere at the back of his neck. He fell down in the ditch where he had been

fighting like a hero ; and his comrades, although they had no time for an epitaph, covered the body up with a little loose earth, and left it to the worms.

A faithful servant of his house, however,—for Monsieur Civile was a knight and a gentleman—grieved that his master should lie thus undistinguished among the slain, obtained permission to search for the body, and, if successful, to bring it into the town for more befitting obsequies. He set out on the adventure in the dead of the night, hiding his lantern under his coat, till he had groped his way into the ditch, and was completely screened from the observation of the enemy on the surface of the earth. His heart was well fortified with the enthusiasm of loyalty and affection, or it must have failed him at that trying moment. The Golgotha in which he trod was heaped with the bodies of the slain ; and as his foot now and then slipped on some blood-boltered corpse, he could not help fancying that it stirred and groaned.

No face that he saw resembled that of Monsieur Civile. Two or three, indeed, were so mangled that it would have been impossible to identify them, and among these, no doubt, was his master's ; but how to discover *which* was the question. When at the very brink of despair, however, he saw the glitter of a gem, as it was touched by the rays of his lamp, on one of the dead men's fingers ; and recognising a ring which Monsieur Civile was in the habit of wearing, he joyfully gathered up the owner, and, taking him on his back, made all the despatch in his power out of the ditch. More than once he stumbled among the bodies ;



more than once he stood stock-still, the arms of the corpse dropping perpendicularly over his breast, and the dead face reclining on his shoulder. The hair bristled on his head; his limbs were bedewed with a cold sweat; his knees knocked together.

It was no wonder if the thoughts of a man in this situation were not very steady. He felt his brain turn round. He thought his master spurred him on the leg, and that the dead lips whispered in his ear "Chick! chick!" When he gained the street he did not stay for the challenge of the sentries, but, breaking into a gallop, ran at once to the surgery of the garrison. The surgeons laughed at him.

"Why, Johnny!" said they, "what is this? would you have us doctor a dead man?"

The serving-man was in a rage. He insisted that his master was not dead; and forthwith took him home to his house, undressed him, washed his wounds, and put him to bed.

During five days he watched the senseless body; but so strong a hold had the idea of his being alive taken of his mind, that even then he did not lose hope. Indeed, his hope rather increased than otherwise with the lapse of time; for he persuaded himself, that if life had really been extinct, some of those unpleasant symptoms would have been apparent which attend the process of decomposition. He again applied to the surgeons, and, out of curiosity, they came to see Monsieur Civile. They probed and dressed the wound as if it had been that of a living patient, and the body stirred! Monsieur Civile was actually alive; and in a



very short time his cure became almost certain, when, unfortunately, the town was taken by assault.

A Catholic officer took possession of the house ; and his servants, who were too humane to put their dying host to death, merely lifted him up, palliass and all, and transferring him to a remote chamber, left him in the hands of Providence. Monsieur Civile, it may be imagined, had been long before now forgotten by his living fellow-townsmen ; but his younger brother was not in the same predicament. Certain citizens, who were his enemies, believing that it was he who was in the house, took advantage of the confusion of victory to obtain revenge ; and breaking in, like a pack of wolves, ransacked the building from top to bottom for the object of their hatred. They found no one but a man lying on a palliass, either dead or dying, and him—presuming that he must belong in some way or other to the ousted family—they whirled out of the window. Monsieur Civile fell upon a heap of dung.

Some days after, when the confusion in the town had in a great measure subsided, the relations of the family were able to shew their heads ; and they took advantage of the calm to inquire into the fate of Monsieur Civile. They found that, three days before, either a sick man or a dead body had been thrown out of a back-window, and rightly conjecturing that this was their unfortunate friend, they proceeded to search for his remains. Shivering as they went, for it was the dead of winter, they entered a deserted court ; and there, sure enough, they found the body lying on its impure bed, with no other covering to defend it, were defence

necessary, against the inclemency of the weather, than a cotton night-cap. The result is more easily told than believed ; but as it is given on the authority of the person most deeply interested himself, we venture to say—Monsieur Civile was alive !

Whether cold and hunger, on the one hand, reduced his fever, and the warmth of the dunghill, on the other, proved sufficient for animal life—but this question we leave to the learned. It is sufficient that Monsieur Civile was alive, and that he was transported privily to the “ farm ” indicated above, and that he afterwards wrote with his own hand, and published, an account of his unparalleled calamities.

This singular man was married twice, and lived to a good old age. Even the accident which conducted him to the tomb in right earnest was somewhat uncommon—we say accident, for it will be felt that a man like Monsieur Civile could not die quietly, or as a matter of course, like other people. When he was some time past his grand climacteric, he fell in love with a young girl, and, tortured by suspicion, passed an entire night under her window. The consequence was a severe illness ; and

“ Love, who sent, forgot to save  
The old, the hardy, and the brave ! ”

Monsieur Civile died of jealousy and a fluxion in the breast.

The traveller who is pressed for time, or who takes no interest in natural scenery when unassociated with historical recollections, will do well to proceed direct from

Lillebonne to Caudebec by the great road. He, however, who loves to loiter and to dream—who can admire a beautiful object without knowing if it have a name—whose recollections are drawn, not only from the annals of mankind, but from the history of his own mind—and associated, not only with individual localities, but with all nature,—let him choose the path, narrow and interrupted though it be, by the river side. There the reflective will find food for their meditations, and the sanguine for their dreams. The world of the past is open to that imaginative species of memory which converts the past into the present, and thus enables us to enjoy twice. The world of the future is open to a hope of the same kind, by means of which the far, the difficult, even the impossible, are brought within the compass of our power.

A very foolish question has frequently been proposed with regard to the compatibility of what, in common language, is called *day-dreaming*, with the business and duties of life. This occupation or recreation of the mind we hold to be the most beneficial to which it can apply itself. In a mere worldly point of view, it refreshes the faculties by a total change of labour—for change is all the mind requires, it being incapable of rest. In moral effect it is next to religion itself. No one is altogether bad in his day-dreams. In defeat we are brave; in success, magnanimous; in enjoyment, generous: and the habit of rehearsing virtues in imagination leads us insensibly to practise them in reality.

As for the unfitness of highly imaginative men for the business of life, that is all nonsense. Where are

the examples? Not in Shakespeare, we apprehend, even if he once tried his hand at woodcraft; not, certainly, in Milton, that great man and admirable citizen; not in Spencer; not in Pope; not in Fielding; not in Scott, although he suffered a casualty so frequent with those who desire to accumulate fortune. The great French and German writers of the class whose lives are mostly spent in the world of imagination, were, with hardly an exception, of the same stamp; and the wild career of some of the Italian poets belonged manifestly to the epoch and scenes in which they lived. The greater part of the examples of carelessness and intemperance that are adduced in proof of the danger of the gift of imagination, occur in men of a lower grade, who made use of the popular error as an excuse for follies that would have broken out at any rate.

After passing through the village of Menil-sous-Lillebonne, we arrive at the ruined church of Notre Dame de Gravenchon, an edifice of the fifteenth century, well worth a visit. On the northern side of the nave there is a stone sunk in the wall containing a sculpture in bas-relief, representing a naked figure, which is supposed by M. Langlois to be of Gaulic workmanship. The path leads to Norville, avoiding a turn which the Seine makes here; and from Norville, along the water's edge, to Villequier.

Seen either by land or water, this is a delicious little place. From the river it is one of the gayest-looking villages we ever saw. The houses seem not only neat and clean, but are painted of every gaudy colour you can imagine. A rude breast-work runs along, separating

the single line of cottages from the Seine ; and to this the boats of the inhabitants are moored, at all times within reach of the owners, like the gondolas of Venice. The château dominating the village is the property of the first president of the Cour Royale at Rouen.

From Villequier to Caudebec the same kind of scenery continues ; but, on arriving within nearer view of the latter, the beauty of the landscape increases to a degree of magnificence of which it is not easy to give any adequate idea. In the opposite illustration, sketched from an eminence above the road, Turner has done all that the pencil could do in so small a space ; yet it comprehends only half the view from Caudebec. There is a spot upon the quay of the little town which Vernet the French painter instanced as presenting one of the finest pictures in France. It is too extensive, however, to be copied with any chance of success ; and the traveller, therefore, who is able to see it with his own eyes, is doubly happy. The Seine describes a parallel ellipsis on either hand, marked by the uniform rising of the ground ; but in front, owing to the flatness of the country beyond, the broad river is almost the only object which could come into the piece.

In the town itself there is the same gaiety of colour which we noticed at Villequier. Houses blue, white, yellow, and red, imbedded in the dark green of the foliage, look at a distance like a parterre of flowers. The quay is planted with trees ; cottages and summer-houses surround and dot the sides of the hill ; and paths, winding upward among the trees, lose themselves in the distance. From many of these walks you may



enjoy a finer view than that admired so much by Vernet. The opposite bank gradually rises, till an immense amphitheatre is formed, terminated in the middle by a chain of hills crowned by the hoary woods of the forest of Brotonne.

The church of Caudebec, which Henri IV., on account of its being without a transept, declared to be “the most beautiful *chapel* he had ever seen,” is a very fine specimen of Gothic architecture. The great gate is especially admired for its tasteful delicacy. A balustrade runs round the building, which was formerly resplendent with gilding; and on the wall, or entablature, some portions of the *Salve Regina*, *Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, and *Tota pulchra es*, are inscribed in letters three feet long. The interior has lost a great deal of its splendour; but the chapel of the Virgin, where the body of the principal architect reposes, is still highly worthy of the traveller’s attention. His name, we learn from the epitaph which describes his share of the task, was Le Tellier; and, after having been thirty years employed in the work, he died in the year 1484 (*lan mil iiii<sup>e</sup> quatre bings et quatre*), leaving to the church a rent of *seven sols and six deniers*.\*

Caudebec possessed a port so early as 853, since Charles-le-Chauve, by a charter dated that year, presents it, with its *port*, &c. to the monks of Fontenelle. It was not, however, a place of any importance, or the Normans in their frequent visits to the monastery would not have overlooked its dependency. It was probably

\* About threepence three farthings.







not a town till the latter part of the eleventh century ; for its church is mentioned by William, in a charter dated at Lillebonne, shortly after the conquest of England. At the beginning of the fifteenth century it was surrounded by walls and ditches, and protected by towers, and was in a condition to disregard the summons of Henri V., after the capture of Rouen. It was besieged by Warwick and Talbot, and taken, after an entrenchment of six months. Talbot became the governor, and held it for England till 1449, when all Normandy was united to the French crown by Charles VII. Caudebec is well known also in the wars of the League ; having had the honour of wounding the Duke of Parma in the arm when he besieged it. Before this time it had several manufactories, particularly one of gloves made of goat-skins, and so fine that a pair could be contained in a walnut. Its hats were also famous, under the name of Caudebecs ; but the revocation of the Edict of Nantes scattered its artisans, and consequently its arts, over the face of the earth. To make up for the loss of real advantages, the government overwhelmed the town with those fatal gifts bestowed before the revolution upon the places which the king delighted to honour. Caudebec was the seat of the bailliage of Caux, and at the head of six sergenteries. It possessed, besides, innumerable courts and offices, such as présidial, provôté, maîtrise, amirauté, élection, grenier à sel, haute justice seigneuriale, recette des tailles, ferme générale, direction des aides, bureau des traites, bureau des domains, &c. The consequence, it is said, is felt to this day, in the absurd importance attached by the inha-

bitants to official titles, and the consequent disdain of commercial employment. Travellers who do not advert to the above causes, express their astonishment “*que l’industrie ait si peu d’activité dans une ville qui offre tant des chances et des avantages à son développement.*”

Near the town is the holy well of Saint Onuphre, a sort of puddle celebrated for the cure of all cutaneous diseases from ringworm to leprosy. On a particular day in the year the unclean patients resort to the waters in crowds, to drink, and bathe, and wallow in the marsh. Each of them, at the commencement of the exercises, gathers a branch in a neighbouring wood, which he deposits in some central spot; and in the evening, the faggot so formed is set fire to by the parish priest, who comes forth to the expectant flock dressed in his sacerdotal robes, and marching to the tune of an anthem. When the smoke is at the thickest, he flings a white dove into the cloud, and as the liberated bird rises from amidst into the air, the patients fall upon their knees, exclaiming, “It is the Holy Ghost!” On this signal a lame man starts up, throws his crutches into the fire, and is straightway cured. The ceremony concludes with copious draughts of cider, which the patients, we have no doubt, find a more pleasant, if not a more medicinal beverage than the foul waters of Saint Onuphre.

We had not ourselves an opportunity of witnessing this ceremony; but we have not the smallest doubt of at least its temporary efficacy. At one time we supposed that the imagination could only exert such a power over nervous maladies; but we have watched a

variety of cases with equal jealousy and curiosity, in which the patient was cured for the time of diseases apparent—and horribly apparent—in the skin and flesh. In one of these, a disorder of our times, resembling, and perhaps identical with, the ancient leprosy, was cured by *the seventh son of a seventh son*. After the prayers were said by the operator, who was a poor, simple, devout-looking country lad, the patient rose from the sofa on which he had lain for many days in helpless agony, drew his stocking over the diseased leg, and walked forth upon his affairs! His faith sustained him for nearly a week, but gradually the charm dissolved. This individual was a shrewd, worldly-minded man, and, although an Irishman, not a Roman Catholic.

We complain of the introduction of new diseases; but we forget that at the present day we dispute about the very identity of a malady, for which a few centuries ago there were more than twenty thousand lazarettos in Europe. In the fourteenth century, in the domains of the Seigneur de Courcy alone, there were ten of these leprosies; and in all France, there were supposed to be more than two thousand. In Dauphiny there was one for nobles alone; and, near Paris, one for females of royal blood. Vanity of vanities! Let us devote a moment to recalling the ceremony which cut off alike the royal, noble, and plebeian leper from the society of his fellow-men.

Clothed in a pall, the dead-alive stood at the steps of the church at the appointed hour, the people forming a wide circle round him, and gazing with dread and horror on the victim thus pointed out by the wrath of



Heaven. The clergy of his parish then appeared, walking in procession, and the leper followed them into the church, and laid himself down on a bier, set round with lighted tapers. The service for the dead was then performed, with the usual chanting of prayers, sprinkling of holy water, and flinging of incense ; and when the unhappy wretch was thus religiously dead, he was taken out of the town to the solitary hut appointed for his habitation.

A pall hung above the door, surmounted by a cross, before which he fell upon his knees ; and the priest then commenced an exhortation, enjoining him to the virtue of patience, recalling to his memory the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and pointing out to him that heaven above his head, where there are no tears and no lepers, but where all are for ever sound, for ever pure, and for ever happy. He then took off his coat, and assumed the leper's dress, and the clicket, or rattle, by which he was for the future to give notice of his approach, that his fellow-men might fly from the polluted path. The priest then pronounced the interdictions prescribed by the ritual.

“ I forbid thee to go abroad without thy leper's dress.

“ I forbid thee to go abroad with naked feet.

“ I forbid thee to pass through any narrow street.

“ I forbid thee to speak to any one except against the wind.

“ I forbid thee to enter any church, any mill, any fair, any market, any assembly of men whatever.

“ I forbid thee to drink, or to wash thy hands, either in a well or a river.



“ I forbid thee to handle any merchandise before thou hast bought it.

“ I forbid thee to touch children, or to give them any thing.”

The priest then gave him his foot to kiss, threw a handful of earth upon his head, and, having shut the door of the hut on the outcast, recommended him to the prayers of the bystanders, who immediately dispersed.

The goods accorded to the leper were safe from robbers; his vineyard, his cow, his sheep, might remain without a keeper; for no extremity of hunger could tempt any one to put forth his hand upon the property of the accursed. His former clothes, his house, his furniture, were burnt to ashes; and if his wife chose to follow the footsteps of his despair—*which was not rarely the case*—she also was devoted when living to the leper's doom, and when dead, her ashes were refused a resting-place in consecrated earth. In consecrated earth? What have we said? It is the relic which sanctifies the place; and wherever were thrown the remains of that devoted wife, *there* was holy ground!

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE BAR OF THE SEINE.

OPPOSITE Caudebec there was formerly an island called Belcinne, inhabited by some monks, who had built there a little convent. It belonged, as well as the seigneurie of Caudebec itself, to the celebrated monastery of Fontenelle ; but the little convent was so much eclipsed by its splendid superior, that few visitors sought the solitary shore, except now and then a pious fisherman, who went to return thanks to God and the Virgin for his escape from the perils of the Seine. One day, however, the Lord of Caudebec bethought himself suddenly, that he had never paid his vows at the humble shrine ; and, seized with a fit of devotion, he stepped into his barge, and was soon at the foot of the altar.

The extreme poverty of the place, however, the nakedness of the altar, and the mortified looks of the holy brethren, hardened his heart ; and, gazing around him for a moment, as if he had merely come out of curiosity, he turned away, and regained his barge. The water was rough ; and the poor priests, instead of resenting his haughtiness, besought him to take care lest his vessel, which was heavily loaded, should sink.

“ Do you threaten me ? ” said the Lord of Caudebec, conscious that he deserved no kindness.

“ God forbid !” said the poor priests ; “ we trust you will live long enough to be fit for death : it is only the righteous who can afford to die suddenly ; and to them death is the highest boon even Heaven can bestow on this side of eternity.”

“ Pull away, my men !” cried the seigneur, abruptly. “ As soon shall their solid island sink in the Seine as this trim vessel of ours.”

“ Sooner, we pray God,” replied the monks ; “ sooner ! — sooner !”

The next morning, the Lord of Caudebec, while looking out of the window of his château, rubbed his eyes, and blessed himself. The island had disappeared, the convent, the monks—all had been swallowed up, and sunk in the river ! The effect of this awful lesson may be imagined. The seigneur retired into the monastery of Fontenelle, where he lived a holy life long enough to understand that death may be looked upon by the righteous as a boon.

This event must have occurred after the year 853, the seigneurie of Caudebec not being till then the property of the monks of Fontenelle, who in that year received it as a gift (as we have before noted) from Charles-le-Chauve. In the year 1641, however, the island suddenly reappeared ; and the inhabitants of Caudebec saw, with superstitious wonder, the broken walls of the convent, which by that time was only a memory of “ the oldest inhabitant.”

Still, it did not remain long the object of their gaze. The waters of the Seine, as if conscious of the presence or approach of some terrible phenomenon,

shuddered visibly. A low moaning sound was heard along the river; and presently a white line appeared in the distance, extending from shore to shore. The noise increased, till it resembled first the bellowing of a herd of wild beasts, and then the roar of a cataract. The white line appeared to be a wave of boiling foam rushing against the stream, and revolving as it rushed on its own axis. Sometimes it broke upon the prow of a vessel steering down to the sea; and sometimes it lifted her up, and dashed her headlong upon a sand-bank, formed at the instant as if for her destruction. Occasionally it overflowed the terrace-banks of the Seine, sweeping away cattle, huts, and men, at one blow; but immediately recalling its forces, it held on its wild career,—shouting the louder as it flew, and increasing in magnitude till it resembled a hill of foam. On reaching the point of Quillebœuf, nearly opposite Lillebonne, straitened by the immense sand-banks which there almost choke up the river, its fury seemed to reach its climax. This was only in appearance, however. Carrying every thing before it, it continued its deadly course, more calm but not less fatal, along the narrowed stream, till, rolling past Caudebec, and swallowing up the island of Belcinne, with its convent-walls, at a mouthful, it appeared to spend its rage, and gradually subside in the distance.

Some readers will think that we are drawing our traveller's bow with a vengeance; yet the scene which we have endeavoured to describe without exaggeration did actually occur, and the island of Belcinne, so strangely vomited forth by the waters, was actually

swallowed up again in the fracas, and never more reappeared. And, moreover, the same watery phenomenon—which is the famous bar of the Seine—occurs still, with a greater or less degree of violence, once every month, at the full of the moon, and more especially during the equinoxes.

Saint Pierre, who briefly describes it in the “Studies of Nature,” was not merely a witness, but had almost become a victim. He rose up in astonishment to gaze upon the “*montagne d’eau*” rolling upon him so unexpectedly; when the leap of the vessel, as she was struck by the bar, threw him overboard, and he was nearly drowned.

The river, in fact, from Quillebœuf downwards, is not at any time very safe for mariners; the ever-new formations of sand changing its surface so constantly, that the vessel which gets down in safety in the morning will hardly know her way back in the afternoon. But if this circumstance injures the commerce of the little ports of the Seine, it serves to produce employment for great numbers of the inhabitants. At Quillebœuf alone there are seventy pilots and their assistants, constantly occupied in exploring the river, and ascertaining the changes that take place each tide in the sand-banks. Notwithstanding this, however, accidents are very frequent; more especially, as a French author asserts, among the English vessels,—the pride of that nation not permitting them to be beholden to French pilots! Nor are the inhabitants themselves always secure. Few seasons pass without some calamity or other occurring; and, a short time ago, not fewer than



seventeen persons were drowned by the bar at one sweep. They were the feasters at a wedding party, who had taken the freak of carrying out the bride and bridegroom into the Seine, in order to vary the enjoyments of a day usually so delightful to all parties. They gained the middle of the river, when they were suddenly alarmed by the roar of the approaching bar. They endeavoured to gain the shore ; but the wind was contrary. They were thrown back into the stream. The virgin-wife was seen throwing her arms round her husband's neck, and burying her face in his bosom. The next instant the bar swept wildly over their heads. Eight days after, three bodies were thrown upon the shore : the rest of the seventeen were never more seen.

The bar is rarely formidable after it passes Villequier, or at least Caudebec ; although its influence is said to be felt as high up as Pont-de-l'Arche, beyond Rouen.

The monastery of Fontenelle, to which the submerged island belonged, is only a little way from Caudebec ; and thither we directed our pilgrim-steps, after many a long gaze at the bosom of the Seine, in search of the broken walls of the convent.

Always ruins, nothing but ruins, in this " country of castles and cathedrals," the paradise of poets and painters ! We have come to visit the famous monastery of Fontenelle, founded by the descendant of King Pepin, and the nurse of the learning of its age. Where is it ? Where are its towers and spires ?—where its sculptured and painted windows ? its rich cornices ? its columns, and statues, and monuments ? We see only



a desert of long, rank grass, and here and there, in the midst, a ruined wall, or the shaft of a pillar, with its broken capital by its side; and, of all the glories of Fontenelle, the only record we meet is an inscription on some prostrate tumulary stone, indicating an abbot's name, and the date of his consecration and death.

This abbey was founded in the seventh century by Saint Vandrille, by whose name it is better known in our day than by that of Fontenelle. The great archbishop Saint Ouen devoted much attention to it, and under his care it became the most famous school of learning of the period. In the following century the monks built their church of Saint Michel, with stones carried from the ruins of Lillebonne—"de Juliobona castro quondam nobilissimo ac formissimo," which is the reason why we see so few remains of the proconsulate palace.

The invasion of the Normans in 841 was the first check received by the growing fortunes of a shrine which the faithful vied with each other in enriching. On this occasion, however, the marauders were bought off by a ransom; but returning twenty years after, they preferred sounding the depth of the holy coffers with their own hands. A second church was built in 1033, and was destroyed by fire two centuries after. A third arose in the sixteenth century; but the central tower fell down, and destroyed the whole edifice. The monks built no more. A Voice had gone forth—a curse was upon the spot, the deserted pile withered away stone by stone beneath the breath of heaven; and in a few years more, the traveller, less fortunate even than we, will search in vain for the ruins of Fontenelle.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE LADY OF BEAUTY.

SAINT VANDRILLE is near the high road from Caudebec to Rouen ; but after the traveller has meditated for a while among its tombs, let him turn again to the path which leads along the river-side. He will find himself shut in by a line of hills and woods from a view of the country on his left hand ; but this will be amply compensated for by the panorama of the opposite bank of the Seine, gliding past him as the stream runs.

Among the principal objects, he will observe, before he has walked an hour, the château of la Mailleraie, with its hills rising gently behind it, covered with groves and gardens ; and, standing still, he will lose some moments in a dream of the lovely La Vallière, and his lips will unconsciously repeat the description of the elegant Saint Pierre. Then comes the dark forest of Brotonne, covering an area of twelve thousand three hundred acres ; and then commences the abrupt and magnificent sweep of the river, which forms a peninsula (on which he stands), one of the most celebrated spots in the “ country of castles and cathedrals.”

On the opposite bank of the Seine, the form of the land changes instantaneously. A rampart of black hills, crowned with trees, circles round the peninsula, with the river between, like the inner ditch of some





fortress of giants. This singular rampart is flanked by a series of *buttresses*, which, only for their enormous size, we would set down at once as artificial fortifications. They are ridges, diverging at regular intervals from the hill to the water's edge, and pointing towards the rounded end of the peninsula.

The peninsula itself, which nature seems to honour in so remarkable a manner, is almost a flat; and in the midst we see, rising from above its trees, the towers of an edifice that appears well worthy of such fortifications.

Always ruins, however,—still ruins! On approaching nearer, we perceive only a mass of roofless walls, and broken turrets,—wild-flowers in the windows, and nettles in the hall,—ivy instead of tapestry, and carpets of the long grass that grows upon graves. It is the once-famous abbey of Jumièges, whose remains thus stand like a monument to itself. The annexed view is taken from a different point; but the idea it conveys of the mouldering edifice is excellent. The human figures in the piece add to the effect; they seem hastening away from a spot sacred to solitude and desolation.

In all points of local situation—we repeat what we have said elsewhere—commend us to the taste of the monks! Some writers describe the spot before us as having been originally a wild and unwholesome plain, covered with woods and marshes, and indebted eventually to the industry of the holy brethren for its fertility. Their only warrant, however, for this assumption is some obscure etymology, which traces the Latin name *Gemmeticus* to the Celtic *wen* or *guen*, a marsh; and their collateral proof is sought in the marshy nature of



the other lands in the neighbourhood. It is far more likely, however, that the monks would have chosen for their resting-place an oasis in the desert, than a marsh among marshes; and, besides, the old chroniclers are unanimous in describing Jumièges as a spot full of all manner of delights, and especially as a favourite abode of the vine. This plant, however, it must be said, was neither a rarity in Normandy, as M. Jouy supposes, in arguing on the subject, nor is its disappearance to be attributed to the monks; but to the check which its cultivation received from royal edicts, and the consequent introduction of cider as the common beverage of the country.

The abbey was founded, as some relate, by Dagobert; but, according to others, about forty years later, that is to say, in the middle of the seventh century, by Saint Bathilde, the queen of Clovis II., and Saint Philibert, who became the first abbot. This saint, who had only seventy monks under him, made such good use of his time, that his successor counted nine hundred. Four hundred of these holy men, however, were translated to heaven on the same day with the abbot, and thus only five hundred were left to run away from the Normans, who totally ruined the monastery in 851. It was re-constructed by degrees, and in the eleventh century attained the zenith of its splendour. It fell anew, but more gradually. At the revolution the work of destruction was completed; and now the principal objects that once adorned this remarkable pile are to be found in *England*—who bought with gold, in order to preserve them, the relics which the modern Vandals of France would have destroyed.



The ruins, as they now stand, are among the most imposing we have seen. Although the whole of the roof has disappeared from the nave, yet the walls, still standing, convey perhaps even an exaggerated idea of the scale and grandeur of the building. The western towers also are almost entire, at least in the outline; and the view from the summit is one of the most striking that can be imagined. The peninsular form of the land is beautifully developed. Looking towards the stately Seine, which sweeps round you in front, you observe the natural rampart we have described, with its strange buttresses fortifying the opposite banks; on the right is the black forest of Brotonne; on the left, the forest of Mauny; and behind, the woods and precipices of Duclair.

In the midst of all this, the vast ruins at your feet confer a solemn and almost awful character upon the picture. Too far from the surface of the earth to hear the intelligible voices of its inhabitants, you imagine that a preternatural stillness reigns over the scene,—a stillness not interrupted, but rather pointed out in a more startling manner, by the sound of the wind, as it wails among the broken monuments of the past. Among the spectral forms with which you people the nave below, you descry, as they gleam for a moment, and disappear beneath the arches of the lateral vaults (like the shadows of the haunted slumbers of Macbeth), King Dagobert, the second Clovis, his consort Bathilde, Saint Philibert, the Scandinavian Rollo, William Longue-Epée, and Charles VII., the royal protégé of the Maid of Orleans.

But who is she, this lady of the past, who, gliding away from the ruins, seems to take the path towards the little château of Menil in the neighbourhood? Flowers spring up beneath her feet—sweet phantom-flowers, which fade when she has gone by; the air around her is rich with fragrance; the very shrubs, as they wave back their branches to let her pass, appear conscious of the queenly step of beauty. It is Agnes Sorel, the noble, the high-hearted—ay, the honourable, ay, the virtuous Agnes Sorel, the *mistress* of Charles VII. This admirable woman, unambitious of acting the part of a heroine herself, was satisfied with making her lover a hero. “If honour,” said she, “cannot lead you from love, love at least shall lead you to honour!” There is something akin to this sentiment in that glorious stanza of one of our old poets :

“ Yet this inconstancy is such  
As you too shall adore ;  
I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Loved I not honour !”

Agnes Sorel is described by the chroniclers of the time as “la plus belle des belles”—the loveliest of the lovely, and of a sweet, gentle, meek, and holy disposition. She was charitable to excess, kind, generous, and forgiving. Her heart was peculiarly open to religious impressions; and, when summoned by the angel of death in her mid career—in the flush of prosperity, the pride of place, the full glow of a beauty without rival and without comparison—the single error of her life presented itself in the aspect of a mortal sin, and she wept tears of remorse for that heroic love to which,

perhaps, her country owed its freedom. In vain had the blood of the Maid of Orleans flowed in the field—in vain her godlike spirit ascended to heaven on the flames of her funeral pile—had not Agnes remained, the guardian angel of her royal friend, to inspire him with honour through the vehicle of passion, and infuse the enthusiasm of kingly virtue into his soul with the kisses of her woman's love.

Great pains is taken by the courtly historian Chartier to disprove what he calls the scandal that was abroad respecting Agnes and the king; and he even mentions a list of persons—all honourable men—who had inquired formally into the proofs, and declared themselves satisfied of the innocence of the parties. The magnificence of her apparel, and the royal state in which she lived and moved, he attributes to the generosity of her mistress the queen, who took delight in decking out this creature, so surpassingly fair and good, in all the splendour of the time. Agnes, however, subsequently left the service of her kind mistress, and attached herself to the Queen of Sicily; yet no observable difference took place in her appearance or resources.

The time at last came when this radiant being was to vanish from the eyes of her royal worshipper. When Charles was at Jumièges, after the capture of Rouen, Agnes inhabited the little manor of Menil, at a short distance from the abbey; and the path may yet be seen—or conjectured—by which he threaded his way through the wood to his mistress's house. Here she was struck by a mortal sickness, almost in the arms of her lover, and in the midst of that career of

glory which she had incited him to pursue. Some say that she died in childbirth ; others that she fell a victim to the jealousy of the queen : the question matters not ; her high mission was fulfilled, her destiny completed, and she died.

Her heart was buried in the chapel of the Virgin at Jumièges, beneath a lofty and magnificent mausoleum of black marble. Agnes herself was represented kneeling on both knees, and offering a heart to the Mother of Mercy. At the foot of the tomb was another heart in white marble. All this has vanished ; but the tabular piece which covered the mausoleum may still be seen at Rouen, inserted in the wall of a house in the Rue Saint Maur, fauxbourg Cauchoise. Part of the inscription remains in a legible state ; and the whole may be collected from the account of her tomb at Loches, in Touraine, where the rest of her body was buried, and where the monument seems to have been a fac-simile of the one at Jumièges.

CY GIST  
 NOBLE DAMOISELLE AGNÈS DE SOREL,  
 EN SON VIVANT DAME DE BEAUTÉ,  
 ROCHERIE, ETC.  
 PITEUSE ENVERS TOUTES GENS,  
 ET QUI LARGEMENT DONNOIT SON BIEN  
 AUX ÉGLISES ET AUX PAUVRES.  
 LAQUELLE TRÉPASSA LE NEUVIÈME JOUR  
 DE FEVRIER 1449.  
 PRIEZ DIEU POUR LE REPOS DE L'ÂME D'ELLE.  
 AMEN!\*

\* Agnes was dame de Beauté-sur-Marne ; whence she was usually styled, with a gallant and pardonable double-meaning, the Lady of Beauty.

The monks of Loches, whom she had largely endowed with her wealth, received her remains with respect and gratitude; but Charles VII. was no sooner dead (twelve years after), than, in the true monachal spirit, they were seized with religious scruples about having given harbour in their holy ground to the mistress of a *defunct* king. The successor, Louis XI., they knew, besides, had been his father's bitterest enemy, and openly in arms against him; and no doubt he had already given proofs of that ardent devotion which afterwards loaded even his hat-band with medals of the saints. They therefore petitioned with one voice for liberty to remove the contamination to some less sanctified grave.

It is hard to say what were the real thoughts of Louis XI. upon this application—of the friend and crony of Tristan l'Hermite, of him who cut off the heads of his nobles, or shut them up in iron cages, and who hung his less distinguished subjects, like acorns, upon the trees of Plessis. Louis was perhaps a man in some parts of his nature, just as he was an excellent king in almost every thing but his attachment to the use of the rope and the axe. At all events, the reply was, that the desire of the said monks was only devout and reasonable; and that, *on giving up the property bequeathed to them by the deceased*, they were at liberty to do what they chose with her body. A new light broke upon the holy men at this answer. A woman who had given two thousand crowns of gold to the Abbey of Loches, could not have been so *very* wicked as people said; and to this donation poor Agnes had



added tapestries—and not only tapestries, but pictures—and not only pictures, but jewels. Wicked! Why she was positively a saint! What devil could have put it into their heads to think of removing her ashes? They determined, however, to make up for the error by redoubling their tender and respectful cares; and accordingly the Lady of Beauty lay undisturbed for more than three hundred years, when the revolution burst forth, and almost made up for its Vandalism in destroying the monuments, by scattering the monks who guarded them over the face of the earth.

The chapel of the Virgin, in which her heart was buried, forms a considerable part of the ruins, in the midst of which we are now wandering,

“Alone, unfriended, melancholy, slow.”

We entered it through the Salle des Gardes, a naked and gloomy vault, which once echoed to the armed tread of the knights of Charles VII. The glimpse from this place of the more spacious portions of the edifice is full of grandeur; and the effect heightened in a remarkable manner by the light streaming through the open roof upon the broken and mouldering ruins. We enter the church with a superstitious thrill, in the midst of moving shadows, and alternate sunbeams, gliding, phantom-like, along the walls. In a windowed niche before us we saw a stone, by which we learned that there was buried the once warm and noble heart of Agnes Sorel.

“O could I feel as I have felt, or be what I have been,  
Or weep, as I could once have wept, o’er many a vanished  
scene!”



But no, the time has gone by — although not long — the time when, cap in hand, and knee to earth, we should have saluted, with a full heart and quivering lip, the grave of Agnes Sorel. As it was, we bestowed a long and silent gaze upon the spot, while recalling her high and heroic spirit, her glorious beauty, and her devoted love. And yet we do not pretend to aver, that it was without some swelling in the throat, some watery sensation in the eyes, we at length read this line :

“ Hic jacet in tumba mitis simplexque columba.”

Here rests in the tomb a sweet and gentle dove !

These are feelings which we do not wish to live long enough to get over. Nay, Mr. Biblio Dibdin himself had some qualms of sentiment on this spot, although, it is true, he was eating his dinner all the while. His pictorial friend, he tells us, with great *naïveté*, went away to take views, while he, affected by some mysterious sympathy, lingered near the fragments of the tomb and of the meal. There are several things which Solomon frankly owned he did not understand ; and, after such an example of humility, we can have no hesitation in making the same avowal. Among the few questions that puzzle us is this : How any man could possibly eat cold fowl on the grave of Agnes Sorel ?

In another compartment of this vast building is seen the monument of the *Enervés*. If the reader asks who the *énervés* were, we would fain tell him, after certain writers, that they were the two sons of Clovis II., who rebelled against their father — for thereby hangs a tale.

Unfortunately, however, there are other writers, still more worthy of credit, who inform us, without the least remorse, that the said Clovis died at the age of twenty-two ; and that therefore his progeny could not have reached that age of discretion when sons become undutiful. The statues on the monument, besides, which consist of two male figures lying side by side on their backs, are supposed to indicate, by their style and costume, the age of Saint Louis, which is not less than seven hundred years later. The tradition, however, is, that the sons of Clovis, on being taken by their father in open rebellion, were *énervés* by his order ; that is to say, the sinews of their arms were severed, so as to render them incapable of any action requiring muscular force. They were then placed in a small skiff without rudder or sails, and sent adrift upon the Seine. Guided by Heaven, the vessel stranded on the territory of the monks of Jumièges ; and, being found by Saint Philibert, the wandering princes were received into the convent, where they adopted the monastic rules, and died in the odour of sanctity.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE HEIGHTS OF CANTELEU.

It was a project of the Marshal de Vauban — and we rather think its execution was actually commenced — to dig a canal across the neck of the peninsula of Jumièges, and thus abridge the navigation of the Seine by five leagues. Even had this been accomplished, however, it would not have changed our route ; and we should not the less have traced the line of the land till we arrived, after walking nearly a league, at an obscure, modest-looking château, shaded by mysterious woods, and retiring consciously, but not awkwardly, from the gaze of the world.

The little manor of Menil is not by any means remarkable in its appearance ; and the traveller, unacquainted with its associations, would in all probability pass by without even asking its name. Let him enter, however, at our invitation ; and, after wandering through the long corridor which intersects the interior of the house, proceed with uncovered head into the small chapel he will find at the end. There, beneath the Gothic window, is the tribune of the châtelaine — the very bench where she sat, on silken cushions, listening to the holy word, which she disobeyed, perhaps, in fewer points of importance than most women of her day and generation. If the traveller is a Protestant, let him bend his

head reverentially, in honour and memory of virtue — alas ! *human* virtue ; if a Catholic, let him whisper a prayer for the soul of Agnes Sorel.

Lounging lazily along the deserted banks of the river, we at length left the peninsula of Jumièges behind us, and plunged into the high road leading to Duclair. On one side every body was at work in his fields and orchards ; and on the water some fishing-boats with rods and nets kept up the animation of the scene. It was like coming out of a tomb into the business of the world. By and by, we passed an amateur angler, who seemed to us the only absurd and incongruous figure on the whole landscape. This patient, treacherous, and cowardly pastime is only fit for the hours of relaxation of an ancient Jesuit. Look at him as he crawls along the bank, fixing his cat-like eye upon the water ! There is a jerk of the rod, but no bite. Now he tries again—it is nothing ! Now he withdraws his line, not fretfully, however, but as patiently as an ass, and examines the hook. All is right, and he commits it again to the stream. If you return two hours hence, and ask after his day's sport, the philosopher will tell you that he has had a most glorious nibble !

But, hold ! there is something more than a nibble ; he has hooked a fish ! Why, then, does he not draw it in at once, and put an end to its torment by dashing its head against a stone ? Because he is a human cat, whose appetite for cruelty is not glutted till he is wearied of *playing* with the agonies of his victim. He gives the creature the line ; and, forgetting the pain of

its lacerations in the feeling of liberty, it darts away into the deep, when a sudden jerk brings it too, as if by the heart-strings. Away it is allowed to fly again—more feebly, less hopefully, but still instigated to fly, even in the midst of despair, by the common instinct which animates fish and men. The sport continues; its tortures increase, but their physical expression diminishes; and the amateur, meeting no longer that resistance to his power which constitutes the delight of cats and anglers, lands his victim upon the bank. See the calm fingers with which he detaches the hook from its bleeding entrails—the glassy eye with which he counts the gasps of its parting breath, and the throes of its mortal agony! He at length puts it carefully into the basket at his back; and if, in a quarter of an hour after, he still feels the convulsions of life, he is overjoyed at his prowess in conquering so fine and lively a fish!

Hunting and shooting have at least the excitement of exercise for an apology; but still we cannot allow them, as they are practised in this country, to be manly amusements. For our part, we would rather shoot a man than a bird; and to this day we are haunted by the idea of a wanton assassination which we committed when a school-boy upon a sparrow.

Duclair is a little town built upon the water's edge. It is protected behind by lofty steepes, while on the opposite side of the Seine there seems to be a continuous marsh. This alternation of heights and plains—one bank falling as the other rises—has continued almost all along, and forms a peculiarity of the Seine which we



have not noticed in the same degree in any other river. It adds greatly to the extent and variety of the prospects. In the annexed view near Duclair, the land is seen swelling again to a formidable height, soon after you pass the town. The singularly shaped rock is called by tradition *La Chaise de Gargantua*, in honour of which personage, no doubt, the lightning is playing.

The line of *falaises* continues for some distance beyond Duclair, and their summits repay the difficulty of the access by a series of superb views. In some places these rocks are excavated into cellars, and even houses, similar to those noticed in the first volume of this work on the banks of the Loire near Tours. The opposite bank, in the meantime, presents a still more singular appearance. It is a complete marsh, but apparently a very fertile one; and at this moment we see extensive and luxuriant pastures, with only the blades of grass above the water. These are intersected by rows of fruit-trees; and on every little spot of comparatively dry land, there is a thatched cottage, half visible through the foliage which surrounds it.

At the hamlet of Fontaine there are the ruins of an ancient building called the Chapel of Saint Anne, the history of which, so far as we could learn, is altogether unknown.

We are now within a short walk of Rouen; but the Seine chooses to make a coquettish sweep of eight or nine leagues before touching the ancient capital of Neustria, and, what is worse, without offering any thing on our side of the water much worth the journey. We shall therefore, for the present, bid adieu to the





EXPLOSION OF THE "MERCURY"

DESIGNED BY J. H. W. HARRIS, A.R.S.



river; and, after paying our vows at the shrine of Saint Georges de Bocherville, ascend the heights of Canteleu, from which we can swoop down upon the city.

The ruined abbey of Saint Georges, otherwise Saint Martin de Bocherville, stands near the entrance of the forest of Roumare, about two leagues from Rouen. It is considered to afford some of the finest specimens of Norman architecture extant. The church and the hall of the chapter belong to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and are loaded with all the magnificence of those periods. The founder was Raoul de Tancarville, the ancestor of the rude baron whose feud with the house of Harcourt we have described, and governor and chamberlain to William the Conqueror. This canonry was erected into an abbey by his son in 1114; and nearly six centuries after, a new dormitory was added by the last direct descendant of the hero Dunois, and the house of Tancarville.\* The columns of the *salle capitulaire* are ornamented at the capitals with groups of scriptural figures, extremely valuable as specimens of the sculpture of the age. M. A. Deville, however, has published a complete account of the abbey, under the title of an “Essai Historique et Descriptif;” and to this we refer the reader, rather than run the risk of giving him too much at once on the subject of monastic antiquities. Yet we ourselves may be excused for a partiality which the monks very well deserve. The

\* The last Count de Tancarville was Jean II., Viscount de Melun, who was killed in 1415 at the battle of Azincourt. His daughter carried the countship as her dowry into the house of Harcourt, and her daughter married Dunois.

convents were the cradle of modern learning, and the monkish chronicles are the sources of modern history. Moreover, it was long the custom of some of the ancient abbeys—for instance, of Jumièges—to devote one day in the year to prayer and meditation “*pro illis qui dederunt et fecerunt libros*,”—a class of persons who grievously require the good offices of the faithful.\*

Wandering through the forest of Roumare, we

\* At first sight, it might seem proper to divide the persons specified in the rules of the monastery into two classes; the one, *qui dederunt*, meaning the booksellers, and the other, *qui fecerunt*, the authors. Anxious as we are, however, to extend the benefit of the act to the former trade—the *patron* of the latter, according to the wise Johnson—we fear it is impossible. The British Museum and Universities are, no doubt, the successors of the convents as receptacles of the donations of modern books; but unfortunately the book-sellers are only the agents, the cost ultimately falling upon the author. This, however, is a slight evil (except in the case of very expensive works) compared with the enormous profit—*of one-fourth*—which custom authorises the retail sellers to charge. The wholesale houses, which constitute the great majority of the *publishers*, so far from participating in the booty, are ruined by it. They must add together the expense of the copyright, of the paper, print, binding, advertising, &c. &c.; and between the amount of those and the utmost price which can be extracted from the public, after the retailer has deducted his quarter, the profit is, in nine cases out of ten, far from equivalent to the risk of the speculation. The real loss, indeed, may be said to fall upon the author, his copyright being, in mercantile phrase, the raw material, and deteriorating in value in proportion to the heaviness of the expense of bringing it to market. Even in this loss, however, the wholesale publishers participate; inasmuch as they are often tempted, and sometimes forced, to the fatal folly of being satisfied with an inferior article at a lower price—a system which, out of necessity and the nature of things, ends (however it may begin) in bankruptcy. Why should the bookselling trade continue to be fettered by those old-womanly rules which every other has rejected long since with scorn and laughter?

speedily began to ascend the line of hills which was probably the boundary between the country of the Velocasses and that of the Caletes. The former people inhabited the district which is now the Vexin, and spread themselves over the rich plains that lie between Pontoise and Rouen, their capital. The territory of the Caletes commenced at the hills where we are now pausing to take breath as we ascend, and extended to the sea-shore, embracing the line of coast from Havre to Eu, or its dependency Triport. Their chief city was the Juliobona of the Romans, or the modern Lillebonne.

On the left bank of the Seine were six small states, the capitals of which were Evreux, Lisieux, Bayeux, Coutances, Séez, and Avranches;\* all of which, according to the Commentaries of Cæsar, had the right of sending representatives to the general council. The whole tract of country on both sides of the river was named by this literary general the Second Lyonnese; it afterwards took the name of Neustria, when it passed from under the Roman domination; and then became Normandy, in honour of the Nordmann pirate Rollo and his comrades. This last name is still sometimes heard in conversation; but the broad surface of Normandy is now only distinguished by its departmental divisions—those of the Eure, the Seine Inférieur, Calvados, the Orne, and La Manche.

We have now reached the summit of Canteleu, and

\* Civitas Eburovicum, Civitas Lexoviorum, Civitas Baiocassium, Constantia Castra, Civitas Sesuviorum, and Ingenua Abricanorum.

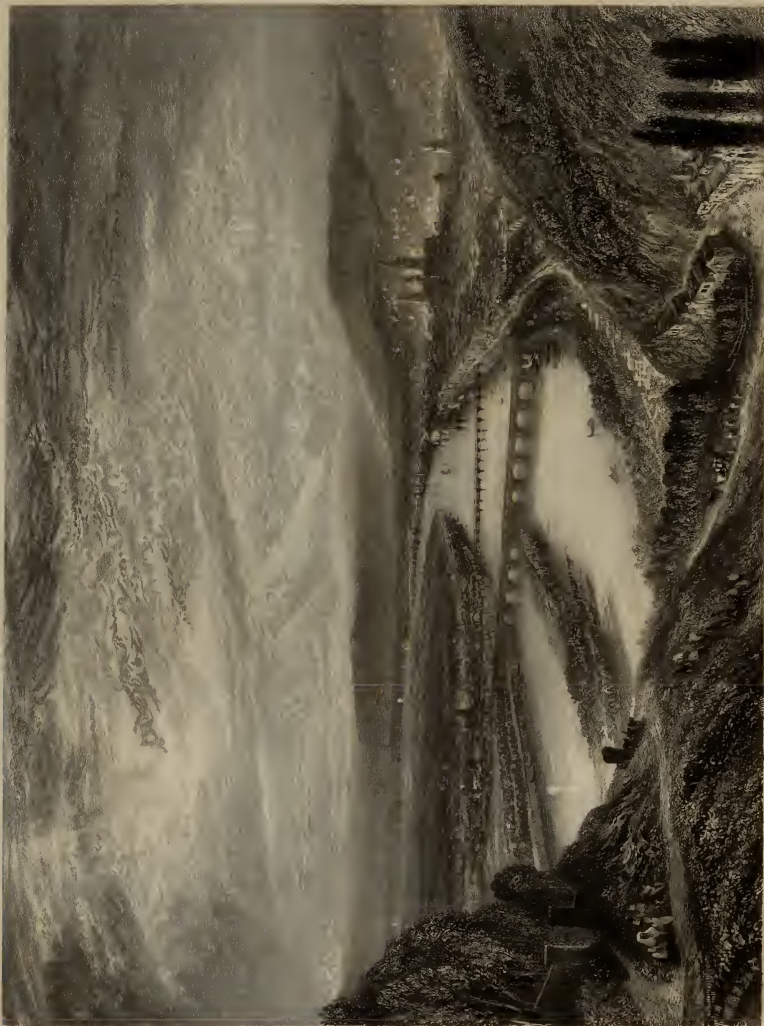


the Norman capital is before our eyes,—the principal object in a scene which, for aught we know, may be equalled, but certainly cannot be surpassed, in Europe. In making this assertion we run no risk, for we have never heard any difference of opinion on the subject. Mr. Dibdin's burst of enthusiasm is so natural, that we could almost forgive him for eating cold fowl on the grave of Agnes Sorel. Besides, he has added a pictorial illustration, which, although not perfectly correct in the relation of some objects, gives a very excellent idea of the truly magical effect of the picture.

The view which attracts the reader's admiration on the opposite page is taken from quite a different point, and is inferior in magnificence only to the scene itself. The vast pile in the centre of the city is that gorgeous cathedral of which Mr. Turner will presently exhibit a nearer view.

The sky was serene, and, although early in the season, the air balmy as well as bracing; there was a delicious silence over the whole scene—a silence which seems so strange, so almost preternatural, when within view of one of the great and ever-restless congregations of the human kind. He who can gaze from such an elevation on a picture like this without an inflation of the breast, a tingling in the blood, a perceptible waxing of the principle of animal life throughout his frame, a disposition to *shout* as he was wont in the brave joy of boyhood,—let him descend at once into the valley. Go delve in the mine, go barter in the streets, go hoard in the closet—but presume not to insult the *genius loci* with a dull eye and a cold spirit!





DESIGNED BY M. W. BURNETT, R.S.A.

ENGRAVED BY J. MILLER



Rouen is not mentioned by any writer earlier than Ptolemy, who flourished in the first part of the second century. By him we are informed that its name was Rothomagus, and that it was the capital of the Velocasses. During the domination of the Romans, it was simply a garrison town, but nothing more ; and from their expulsion till the appearance of the Normans, we hear few details respecting it except the names of its bishops. From this epoch, 841, to the surrender of Neustria to Rollo in 912, Rouen was a scene of confusion, of burning, and massacre, from which the student of history turns away with horror and disgust. With the advent of Rollo, therefore, may be said to commence the interest which the general reader feels in exploring the annals of the city.

The river, which we now see sweeping before us so regular and harmonious, reached at that time to the Rue des Bonnetiers, close by the cathedral. It was broken by numerous islands, on all, or almost all, of which a church was built. Most of these were suppressed at the revolution ; but Saint Eloi still stands, at some distance in the town, to awaken the wonder of the spectator, when he remembers that the time was when it could only be approached by means of boats. The operation of uniting these islands to the main, and building streets and quays on what once was the bed of the Seine, was performed by Rollo and his son William Longue-Epée — not, of course, for the purpose of forming new lands in a country where the great want was population ; but in order to render the river more navigable by damming it up in a narrower bed. We do

not know what was the condition of the opposite bank at that time; but at present it is a marshy, and generally unwholesome flat; and in all probability it was then covered, to a considerable extent, with the waters of the Seine.

The Normans were led to this improvement by the habits of their country and vocation. They were mariners from the cradle, and pirates by trade; and the first thing they thought of, on settling in the country, was to render the river near their capital navigable for their boats.

It is not the least singular circumstance in the history of this singular people, that no man can name with certainty the country from which they came, although their incursions, from their first appearance to their final settlement, occupy a space of at least seventy years. According to some authors, they were Norwegians; according to others, Danes; and according to others, Swedes. Eginhard makes the *Nordmanni* consist of the Danes and Swedes together; but, after all, we are forced to be satisfied with the vague explanation of William of Jumièges, who says simply, that they were Men of the North.\*

Their name of *Bigoths*, it is said, was bestowed upon the occasion of Rollo swearing in his language, “By Got!” When invited, for instance, to kiss the foot of Charles the Simple, in token of his homage, he exclaimed, abruptly, “Ne se, by Got!” which was the

\* “*Nortmanni dicuntur quia, linguâ eorum, Boreas North vocatur, Homo verò Man; id est, Homines Boreales per denominationem nuncupantur.*”

cause of much laughter among the courtiers. From this comes our word *bigot*, which expresses at the present day, as it did in that of Charles the Simple, a person who is at once impious and absurd.

Rollo is called by different writers Rolf, Roull, Harould, Raoul, and Rou. The last name has a singular affinity to that of *Rouen*; but let it pass. He is said to have been of an illustrious and powerful family; but this is only a dream. Even the Norman writers tell us, that the chiefs of these wandering pirates were chosen without reference to any thing but their personal prowess and hardihood; and that, when the battle was over, the general sank into the station of a private individual. Rollo was simply a MAN OF GENIUS, in addition to being "the bravest of the brave;" and this is a far more legitimate title to the ducal crown than most princes of his day could boast.

The original cause of these incursions is unknown; but, in fact, the north appears to have been a point from which successive swarms of barbarians issued from the earliest times to spread themselves over Europe. There is nothing mysterious in this. The northern hordes, when they became too populous, or when some adventurous or ambitious men arose among them, would naturally seek a more genial climate. The Saxons, besides, whom Charlemagne, seventy years before, transported in thousands to the north, may have instilled by their tales the spirit either of revenge or cupidity in the breasts of their sons. Rollo himself may have been a descendant of Vitikind, and thus may have only returned the poisoned chalice to the lips of



the descendants of the Franks. The Saxons, in their origin, were probably men of the north; so were the Gauls or Celts—so were the Franks—so were the Normans. All we know is, that the points of resemblance were numerous and striking among all these nations; and if Rollo had paid his visit before Christianity had created a revolution in manners, his blood-offerings must have been presented on the altars of his own deities. To conclude on this subject, we may observe, that there is a remarkable resemblance between the facility with which the French conqueror Clovis and the Norman conqueror Rollo suffered themselves to be converted to the new religion.

Rollo, there is good reason to believe, was a banished man, an outlaw, expatriated for his political crimes—or virtues. He passed first into England, where he might easily have founded a throne; but our time was not yet come; and, directed by a dream, according to William of Jumièges, he crossed the channel, and penetrated by the Seine into the heart of Neustria.

Rouen had been sacked and burnt by his countrymen thirty-five years before; and on this occasion, as some writers tell us, it sustained a siege very valiantly. Others, however, say that, on the conqueror's arrival at Jumièges, he received a deputation from the citizens, offering to recognise him as their lord; and that this submission was made, not to his power, but to his greatness of character. It matters not a straw which was the case. Rollo became master of Rouen, and soon after of the whole of Neustria. His path, like that of other conquerors, was traced in blood and ashes. His



ranks, thinned in battle, were constantly reinforced by new hordes of his barbarous countrymen, and by the outlawed, the disaffected, and the desperate of the land which he traversed like a destroying angel. The weak Charles at length, determining to glut, since he could not conquer him, bestowed upon the fortunate pirate the whole province, which was thenceforth called Normandy, and the hand of his daughter Giselle. Rollo immediately became a Christian !

We now see him in a new point of view. Become a Christian, a duke, and a husband, the domestic arrangements of this fierce and relentless warrior are sharply criticised by historians. He was, it seems, but a faithless lord to poor Giselle, preferring the smiles of a damsel he had captured, with other baggage, at Bayeux, to those of his lawful wife. He was, however, a great captain, firm, far-sighted, and religious — in presents to the church. He recalled the ruined citizen to his warehouse, the frightened peasant to his fields, and placed his outlawed comrades among them like quiet burgesses. “Set a thief” — but the proverb is somewhat musty. So strict were his laws, and so strictly enforced, that we are told, a golden bracelet which he had hung accidentally on the branch of a tree in the forest of Roumare, remained there three years without any one being tempted to put forth his hand upon the enticing fruit. This reminds us of the “rich and rare” lady of our delightful Moore. The song, indeed, might be made quite as true to Norman history as to Irish, by the alteration of the names and of a single line :

“ Lady, dost thou not fear to stray,  
So lone and lovely, through this bleak way ?  
Are Rollo’s sons so good or so cold  
As not to be tempted by woman or gold ?”

“ Sir Knight, I feel not the least alarm,  
No son of Rollo will offer me harm ;  
For though they love woman and golden store,  
*They fear the whip and the halter more !*”

Rollo at length, growing old, abdicated in favour of his son William Longue-Épée, and died in the year 932.

Shall we be blamed for this sketch, with Rouen at our feet, and the venerable pile rising like a temple of giants in the midst, wherein we are about to see the tombs of the mighty dead ? Normandy is not only interesting as a “ country of castles and cathedrals,” it is renowned both in arts and arms ; its sons were the bravest of the brave in the Holy Land ; it founded the kingdom of the Two Sicilies ; the proud Lion of England crouched beneath its banner.

“ The Normans are an excellent people,” said William the Conqueror, “ when subjected to severe and impartial discipline.”\*

“ They are cunning, revengeful, covetous, hypocritical,” says Malaterra, a Sicilian monk of the twelfth century, “ and preserve a certain mean between extravagance and avarice. They know how to flatter ; they are eloquent ; and, except when held in by a tight bridle,

\* This is, in a few words, the sense of the passage. Orderic Vital, apud Duchesne, p. 656.

are wilful and violent. They endure, when necessary, cold, hunger, and fatigue, without a murmur."

"If we would describe the Normans in a single word," says an anonymous Norman of the present day, "we would say, that this province is the country, *par excellence*, of that faculty so rare elsewhere, and so precious every where — good sense."

"A people," says M. Dubois, "at once brave, industrious, intellectual, wise, and learned—a people who have furnished France with her earliest poets and greatest writers."

The unfavourable part of the picture has been given a hundred times as the character of our dear countrymen the Scotch, particularly by our contemporaries, the *Times* newspaper and its friend Cobbett. The reverse of the medal is inscribed with the legend "Caledonia" by Beattie, whose stanza will be admired on the north side of the Tweed long after Burns is forgotten :

"A nation famed for song and beauty's charms,  
Zealous yet modest, innocent though free ;  
Patient of toil, serene amidst alarms,  
Inflexible in faith, invincible in arms !"

## CHAPTER X.

## THE NORMAN CAPITAL.

DESCENDING into the rich and industrious valley of Bapaume, we rejoin the great road, which conducts us towards the city by the avenue of Mont Ribaudet, planted on either side with a double row of elms. As we approach the imposing mass of habitations, the first thing that fixes our eye is the noble river covered with boats, and lined on one side by a range of houses which remind us of Paris.

While proceeding along the Quai du Havre, which continues the line of the Avenue du Mont Ribaudet, we pause suddenly ; for the city is presented from this spot in its most magnificent aspect—as may easily be supposed by any one who looks at the opposite engraving. On the left, the superb mass of building rising above the rest, surmounted by towers and spires, is the cathedral ; beyond is the stunted and shapeless tower of Saint Maclou, destroyed by tempests and revolutions ; and, still farther, that of Saint Ouen, tall, graceful, and beautiful, the ornament of the most ancient abbey in Normandy. In the distance is a small portion of the hill of Saint Catherine ; and in withdrawing the eye along the course of the river, we meet first the new stone bridge ; then the bridge of boats close by, and almost lost in the reflection of the other in







the water; and, finally, the busy crowd of boats and human beings, which give a perpetual animation to the river.

At the invasion of the Normans there was no bridge at Rouen, as M. Licquet proves, by the fact of Charles-le-Chauve being obliged to transport his army across in boats. The great breadth of the river, however, is proof enough in itself; for it is not likely that even the idea of a bridge could have suggested itself till the stream was reduced to a much smaller compass. The first bridge, however, was considerably longer than the present breadth of the water, since the wall of the ancient quay has been discovered in the foundation of some houses near the Rue Grand Pont.

It is not long since the vestiges of this bridge were seen at low water, near the bridge of boats. It is supposed to have been constructed by the Empress Matilda, the daughter of Henry I., and mother of Henry II. of England. This must have taken place about the middle of the twelfth century; but in the latter part of the sixteenth it was already in so bad a state that it was necessary to cross the river in boats. In 1626, the idea was conceived of making these boats stationary—and hence the present bridge of this kind, which extends across the river a little higher up than the site of the old one. It is composed of fifteen vessels, rising and falling with the tide. It was found, however, to be expensive and troublesome; and in 1810, a new stone bridge, still higher up, was decreed, and in 1829 opened to the public. The trees seen beyond it in Turner's drawing belong to the island Lacroix, which

serves as the foundation of the middle part, or rather the work consists of two bridges meeting on this island.

We have said that we never heard any difference of opinion regarding the picture of Rouen exhibited from the heights of Canteleu ; but when the veil of distance is withdrawn—that half-transparent veil which “ lends enchantment to the view ”—then comes the struggle of tastes. Mr. Dibdin, for instance, is all rapture. The lofty and grotesque streets in the interior of the town make as delightful an impression upon his senses as if they were so many ranges of old, musty, moth-eaten, black-letter folios. There is an air of antiquity about the houses which makes his heart flutter with joy ; he fancies himself transported suddenly into a town of the middle ages ; and, like a boy in a confectioner’s shop, is only puzzled to think which object he shall attack first.

M. Gondinet, a sensible, intelligent, well-informed young writer, may be taken, although unknown in this country, as a favourable specimen of the opposite class of observers.

“ In entering Rouen,” says he, “ by lamp-light, I could have imagined that I was still in Paris. A great street which we traversed, near the theatre, presented us with the brilliant shops, the light, the lustre, the richness and variety, the life and motion, of the Rue Saint Honoré ; but the next day the illusion vanished, never to return. \* \* \* Figure to yourself an immense mass of gloomy houses, arranged in narrow and irregular streets ; districts dirty and full of obstruc-

tions ; old edifices without grandeur ; and a port in which new buildings are mingled with ruins ! ”

For our part, we belong to neither of the classes represented by these two writers. We do not care about antiquity for its own sake ; and yet we can admire a town of old and gloomy houses, and narrow and irregular streets, which does not resemble Paris. Rouen made a stronger impression upon our imagination than any city we have yet seen. To us it seemed still under the sway of the old dukes of Normandy ; and on emerging from the Rue du Bac, we were surprised to find that they had constructed a bridge of boats over the Seine, where even Henri Quatre, that man of yesterday, was obliged to be rowed across.

But to argue on such a subject is vain. Rouen is unquestionably the most interesting city in France to an Englishman ; it is the city of Rollo ; it is the capital of Normandy. We therefore propose to describe it more methodically than our erratic habits would seem to permit ; and we shall take care to give such local names and notions, *chemin faisant*, as will enable the reader to find his way without the assistance of a *valet de place*.

There is nothing to hinder our commencing on the very spot where we now stand, on the Quai du Havre : nay, this is the best starting-place we could select ; for, in all probability, the traveller will lodge in one or other of the hotels that face the river.

A little way lower than the bridge of boats is the Rue Grand Pont, to which the old stone bridge, now destroyed, extended. At the corner of this street stands

the Théâtre des Arts, which needs not detain us long. It is, in fact, not worthy of the town.

The next street on the quay is the Rue Nationale, with the Tribunal of Commerce, commonly called the Consuls, at the corner—a large building decorated with some pictures and several Latin inscriptions. Proceeding still along the quay, we turn the corner of the Douane, and, ascending the Rue de la Vicomte, arrive at the church of St. Vincent, on the right hand of the street. This was formerly called Saint Vincent-sur-Rive, because it stood upon the bank of the river; where it served as a sort of custom-house, at which vessels laden with salt deposited a certain quantity for behoof of the parish. The painted windows of the church are greatly admired by the curious in the art. One of them represents the miracle of the mule, performed at Toulouse by Saint Anthony of Padua. A heretic of the former city, it seems, had the hardiness to doubt whether the second person of the Trinity was actually devoured in the holy wafer; and so improbable did the transubstantiation appear to him, that he declared he would not believe, unless the fact was confirmed by a miracle. The miracle he demanded was nothing less than that the mule on which he rode, on being presented with oats and hay after a famine of three days, would neglect its breakfast for the purpose of adoring the sacred host. The saint agreed to grant his desire. The mule was starved for the stipulated time; and instead of falling upon the food which was offered it, turned suddenly away on perceiving the holy sacrament in the hands of Saint Anthony, and dropped down on its knees before it.

Passing the church of Saint Vincent, we take the first turning to the right, which is the Rue aux Ours, and then the first to the left, which leads us to the antique Tour de la Grosse Horloge. This is a construction of the fifteenth century, the bell of which is called the *silver bell*—a name which refers, perhaps, in poetical fashion, to its sound. It rings for a quarter of an hour every evening at nine o'clock, and thus answers to the English curfew of William the Conqueror.

In the Grande Rue, of which this tower forms a part, there are two antique wooden houses—Nos. 115 and 129—which will attract the stranger's attention, notwithstanding the display of merchandise in a street where almost every house is a shop. Turning up a short avenue, however, almost opposite the tower, he arrives at the Palais de Justice and the Salle des Procureurs—not one building, as might be imagined, for the former was built by Louis XII. in 1499, and the latter by the town of Rouen in 1493. Before the latter date the merchants used to congregate in the cathedral, thus making the temple, if not “a den of thieves,” yet a rendezvous for buyers and sellers; and the Salle was at last built by the scandalised authorities at the public expense. It is a vaulted apartment, sixty feet long and fifty broad, the roof unsupported by pillars, and the whole executed in a taste at once chaste and bold. Another apartment, contiguous, which serves as the Court of Assize, is very beautiful, although almost all the ornamental work has disappeared. Its ceiling is of oak, grown black with age.

The façade of the Palais de Justice gives a good



idea of the peculiar taste of the period at which it was constructed. It is loaded with ornaments, mostly incongruous, but still producing in the whole an agreeable and striking effect. The Rue aux Juifs runs along the Salle we have mentioned; and, without knowing the mercantile purpose for which this hall was built, one would be surprised to find the persecuted remnant of Israel in such neighbourhood. The Jews, in fact, were always the victims of law, and, in their own dealings, were supposed to have little to do with justice.

In France, as elsewhere, they were in general confined to a single street, or quarter of the town; but it is curious to observe, that even after the interdicts which fettered them were relaxed, they still continued to herd together as closely as their avocations permitted—the destiny of the “peculiar people” thus seeming to set at defiance both the rigour and lenity of the Gentile nations. At the time of the second crusade, they would probably have been exterminated in France, but for the exertions of Saint Bernard himself, the enthusiast who kindled the zeal which sought to consume them. This took place under the reign of Louis le Jeune, a violent, foolish, and devout prince; but his son Philip, surnamed Augustus, took the part of banishing entirely this class of his subjects, the masters and conductors of all the commerce his kingdom could boast. He soon, however, discovered his error, and permitted them to return; and the poor Jews, restrained by no modern Moses, hastened back to the flesh-pots of Egypt and the chains of Pharaoh.



Louis VIII. forbade them to lend *at interest*. Foolish tautology!—would they have lent without interest? In the time of the next Louis—he who was very properly promoted to be a saint by the church, in reward for his being far less wicked than his predecessors—they were first banished, and then invited to return. Philippe le Bel fostered them for a time, and then packed them out of the kingdom. The latter proceeding was the very essence of benignity in a prince who burned the Knights Templars at a slow fire. The Israelites were recalled by Louis le Hutin; but the people rose against them in all quarters. At Chinon an immense grave was dug, filled with combustibles, and set on fire; and sixty Jews were thrown living into the flames. In Aquitaine it was at one time the custom to hunt them like wild beasts. Notwithstanding all, the Jews returned from their frequent banishments as soon as they were permitted to do so, and established themselves on the very spot where their fathers had perished in the flames or swung on the gibbet.

In addition to being confined to a separate quarter of the town, they were obliged to distinguish themselves by wearing two circles of felt, or of some yellow stuff upon their coat, one before, and one behind. They could be thrown into prison by the order of a simple monk; they were forbidden to suckle their children by means of Christian nurses; they durst not bathe in a river; if condemned to death, they were hung between two dogs. In the midst of these rigorous laws the interest on their loans was reduced to two deniers in the livre *per week*, affording an annual profit on their capital

employed of nearly forty-five per cent.\* They were forbidden, besides, to receive in pledge the plate of a church, the iron share of a plough, or cloth stained with blood !

The pawnbrokers of our day in England are better off. Their twenty per cent is much more extravagant interest, according to the relative value of money, than the forty-five per cent of the Jews at the time we speak of. They have no occasion, besides, to dread a revision of the law which gives up the substance of the poor into their hands ; for this simple reason, that it is the interest of the rich to keep the poor dependent. A rich man exclaims against the villany and impiety of those who *illegally and usuriously* seek more than five per cent from him for a temporary loan ; but he knows very well, at the same moment, that his poorer neighbour, who gives the bed from under him as a security, must pay twenty per cent, without any lawful pretext for grumbling. The odd thing is, that the security of the poor is much more complete than that of the rich ; for the pawnbroker advances not a penny till he has the pledge in his possession ! Money, in our opinion, should be under no more restriction than any other merchantable commodity ; but if the mania of legislation *will* interfere, why tax the temporary necessities of the poor with twenty per cent, and those of the rich with only five per cent ? But, as we have said, there is no hope on this subject. Even the critics, who will

\* The denier is the twelfth part of a sous, and there are twenty sous in a livre, or franc.

bestow upon our lucubrations a modicum either of charitable praise or of too just censure, will avoid, with a blush or a frown, the *ungenteel* topic. No matter! Born in the middle rank ourselves, we love the poor from sheer vulgarity. If our destiny had been higher, we should have slighted them through ignorance; if lower, through a mean and pitiful pride.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE SORCERESS.

RETURNING to the Grande Rue, and passing the Tour de la Grosse Horloge, we reach presently the Place de la Pucelle.

The area of this spot, filled at once with ennobling and humiliating associations, is small. A well and a statue—the latter inferior even to that at Orleans itself—marks the place where the heroic girl died. Some hackney-coachmen sleep on their boxes close by; the population of the city floats along, without turning the head—without raising the eyes.

If all the other crimes perpetrated by the English in France were heaped into one mass, they would not equal in guilt and horror the execution of Jeanne d'Arc. It is inconceivable to think how men, who possessed at least the property of physical courage, could have been guilty of so cowardly an atrocity. In fact, the whole transaction resembles the disjointed fragments of some hideous night-mare, which it is impossible to arrange on any principle of moral perspective. We may suppose that the English were carried away by a brute-rage, engendered by the shame of defeat; but among the judges of the Maid there were Frenchmen as well as Englishmen. Among the former were the Bishop of

Beauvais (afterwards of Lisieux), the Bishop of Bayeux, and the Abbots of Fécamp, Jumièges, Bec, and Mont St. Michel; and at the execution, the English were not only impatient for her blood, but also, as Massieu says, “*several other captains.*” Can we understand, either, the poor, pitiful, sneaking conduct of Charles VII., who was in other respects a hero?

At the siege of Campiegne, the young heroine was wounded and taken prisoner by the English, clothed in armour and standard in hand. A tribunal was immediately formed, composed of nine doctors of the Sorbonne, and thirty-five abbots and monks; the vicar of the Inquisition, brother Martin, presiding, assisted by the Bishop of Beauvais, mentioned above. They tried her, not for delivering her country from a foreign yoke, and chasing away the English from before the banner consecrated by her high and holy enthusiasm—but for sorcery! She was condemned therefore to suffer the death of a heretic, and to pass through the fire to Mammon.

Placards were carried before her to the place of execution, stating the nature of her crime. She was declared to be guilty of divination, blasphemy, superstition, and of wearing men’s attire—a thing abominable in the sight of God! On her arrival, a sermon was pronounced by Midy; and Massieu informs us that she listened with great firmness and attention. At the conclusion she was delivered up to the secular authorities—for the priesthood of the Lamb of God never shed blood!—the preacher saying, “Go in peace, the church can no longer defend thee!” The holy bishop

of Beauvais then read her sentence aloud, and Jeanne fell on her knees.

Her prayers, however, and those of her confessor, were thought too long; and the English, "and even several other captains," exclaimed brutally, "Hollo, priest! do you mean that we are to dine here?" They at length took hold of her, and, bowing to all the assistants, she walked towards the funeral pile, and was delivered to the executioner.

This man relates that the scaffold on which she was placed was built very high above the faggots, and *plastered*, so that the flames could not easily catch, nor quickly reach her; "for the which he was exceedingly sorry, having great compassion for the cruel form and manner in which they made her die." So slowly did the fire burn, that her confessor, Martin Ladvenu, who stood with her upon the scaffold, was not aware that the pile had been lighted, till the circumstance was pointed out to him by Jeanne herself, who besought him to retire, but to hold up the cross to her at a distance, that her eyes might look upon it to the last.

After the deed was over, the executioner was struck with great horror and religious despair. He declared that the heart of the victim would not burn. Her remains, however, were on the same day collected by the order of the English cardinal, and thrown into the Seine.

Many stories went abroad after her death. Among others, it was stated that, owing to the peculiar construction of the scaffold, she had escaped from the flames; and, in consequence, her name was assumed



by more than one counterfeit. A gentleman, whose name was Des Armoires, was so well deceived, that he actually married a young woman who gave herself out to be Jeanne d'Arc.

Some years after, her sentence was revised, and the murdered girl declared innocent by the Pope. A cross was raised upon the spot, and then a fountain, said to have been of beautiful workmanship. Both, however, have disappeared; and the paltry erections which now occupy so remarkable a site are a reproach to the city.

The Place de la Pucelle formed part of the Vieux Marché, which, at the time of her execution, being the great public market-place, occupied a considerable area. At the end of the fifteenth century, it was intersected by some houses; and one of them, opposite the monument of Jeanne d'Arc, exists still, and is worthy of the traveller's attention. This is the Hôtel du Bourgtheroulde, celebrated for its bas-reliefs, of which the principal represent the meeting of Henry VIII. and Francis I. on the Field of the Cloth of Gold. These bas-reliefs are very precious, not only as memorials of the sculpture, but also of the costume and manners of the age. Those relating to the interview between the two kings are five in number; four of which are occupied with the processions. The fifth represents the meeting, and is interpreted by Montfaucon to this effect:

The two kings are seen saluting, and holding their hats raised in the right hand. The housing of the French king's horse is ornamented with fleurs-de-lis, and that of Henry with leopards and rosettes alter-

nately. At the side of each there is a valet on foot, whose caps have plumes of feathers falling back over the head. The last cavalier on the right belongs to the suite of the King of France, which is seen by the royal salamander on his back.

The Protestant church of Saint Eloi, close beside the hotel, merits little attention. It stood formerly upon an island, which afterwards formed part of the *terres neuves* that, in the eleventh century, were the fauxbourgs of Rouen.

From the Place Saint Eloi a few steps take us into the Rue du Vieux Palais, along which we proceed to its end further from the river. Here, on the left, is a narrow street, or rather lane, called the Rue de Pie, into which we entreat the reader to follow us. We stop at a certain door, and contemplate respectfully a bust which ornaments it, neither in bronze nor marble, but in common plaster. Is our companion surprised? Let him cast his eyes a little higher up, and read on the slab fixed in the wall,

PIERRE CORNEILLE  
EST NÉ DANS CETTE MAISON  
EN 1606.

The house, of late years, has been *beautified*, as our churchwardens say, and has lost almost all traces of antiquity. The anniversary of this father of the French Drama is celebrated every year at the theatre with great magnificence.

Turning to the right, after traversing the Rue de la Pie, we find ourselves presently in a broad street, ter-

minated at some distance by the extensive buildings of the Hôtel Dieu. This is a work of the last century, constructed in consequence of the dangerous state of the ancient Hôpital de Sainte Madeleine, near the cathedral. The charity is reserved for the inhabitants of the town alone, and only for cases that appear to be curable. After a treatment of six months here without fortunate results, the patient is declared incurable, and sent to the Hospice Générale. The patients are attended not only by the proper medical officers, but by the religious ladies of the order of Saint Augustin, who are unwearied in their assiduity.

This beautiful and affecting species of beneficence is very ancient in France ; but the rules under which even the lay-brothers and sisters of the hospital voluntarily placed themselves were so austere, that one is surprised to find in the number those who had still any thing left to attach them to the world. In the fourteenth century, a man dedicating himself to the service of the Hôtel Dieu of Paris became to all intents and purposes a monk, although without taking the vows. He cut off his hair, wore a black dress, with long white trousers, assisted at all the offices of religion, abstained from meat four days in the week, ate at a common table, lay down to sleep without undressing, and came under an oath of poverty and chastity.

The sisters, of whatever rank, wore a gown of black serge ; a kind of cloak, black also, and furred with lambskin ; a white apron, and a linen cap with large wings which concealed the face. They were under the direction of a matron, who punished the slightest fault

by public penance, a diet of bread and water, and even the scourge.

The first thing a patient did on entering the *Maison-Dieu* was to confess and communicate. He was then master of the house, and the brothers and sisters were his servants. Nothing was refused which a sick fancy could desire. Meats were daily sent from the daintiest tables for their use ; and it was not unknown for a sum of money to be left to the establishment with which to gratify, on the anniversary of the testator's death, every whim of the sick, at any expense. One legacy was destined to buy them soup ; another, fruit and confectious. Louis IX., it is known, was often on the point of becoming a brother of the hospital ; and the Hungarian queen of Louis X. left the *Hôtel Dieu* the bed on which she died. This kind of donation was first begun by the canons of *Notre Dame*, and soon became general among all classes.

The elegant modern church of the *Madeleine* is connected with the buildings of the *Hôtel Dieu*. Behind the master-altar is the chapel of the dames of *Saint Augustin*, the ministering angels of the hospital ; and before the great gate there is a magnificent avenue planted with trees, which leads us along the *Champ de Foire* into the *Avenue de la Ribaudet*.

We have now made a tour long enough for a morning's walk ; and, on turning to the left, are not sorry to see the shipping and the bridges before us, which point out the position of our hôtel. In passing, however, the entrance of the *Boulevard Cauchoise*, we pause for a while to gaze upon the site where once stood the

ancient palace built by our Henry V. A thick tower was the commencement of the edifice, which received the significant name of Mal-s'y-frotte, and was finished by Henry VI., five years before the celebrated siege of Rouen. The governor of the fortress lodged in this tower, the walls of which were fifteen feet thick. The whole edifice was protected on the south by the Seine, and every where else by wide and deep ditches.

This palace, of which we do not now see a stone, was inhabited by Talbot, the general of the English, in 1449.

When the city was summoned by Charles VII., it is related that he would not permit the heralds to approach, but used them so roughly that they were in danger of their lives. The French immediately took up a position before the walls; and although it rained in torrents for three days, as Jean Chartier informs us, "*ceux de la ville faisoient des fortes, grandes, et furieuses sorties, et où il y est de grandes proüesses et beaux faits d'armes.*" The king again summoned the town by heralds, but again the unpolite English drove them away—a thing, says the historian, "contrary to all seigneurie and chivalry:"—"for if the English had possessed understanding and good manners, they would have called, and received the said heralds, and listened to any summons they chose to make; they would then have set before them drink and victuals in honour and reverence of the prince from whom they came; and then have returned them an answer as the case required." On this repeated incivility, the king and his general, Dunois, perceived that there was no hope of a



surrender; and the weather being much broken, as it was now near winter, they retired to Pont de l'Arche.

They were speedily informed, however, that the French party in the town was stronger than they imagined; and that two of the towers flanking the walls were actually in the possession of the king's adherents, who waited impatiently to favour any attack that might be made. Charles immediately gave orders to march; and on arriving near Rouen, created a number of knights, according to a well-known custom, who were expected to earn their spurs in the assault. These mounted the walls very gallantly at the head of their party; but were received by Talbot with three hundred English, who had rushed to the spot on hearing of the attack. A fierce but brief combat took place. The French were beaten, and were either slain fighting, driven over the walls, or massacred afterwards in cold blood.

The bitterness of the assault, however, and the fierce cruelty of the English, alarmed the inhabitants so much, that the utmost excitement prevailed, and secret meetings took place; and at length, as the public mind became pretty well known, it was supposed that, on the first favourable opportunity, a rising would take place, the result of which would be the massacre of the garrison. They contented themselves, however, with waiting upon the Duke of Somerset, the viceroy of Normandy, and representing to him that the famine, already in the city, made it imperative upon them to take some steps towards an accommodation; and the duke, who saw his little band of fifty or sixty sur-



rounded by at least a thousand armed citizens, was at last fain to sanction a deputation to the king.

When the deputation returned, however, although the terms obtained were very agreeable to the inhabitants, the English could not brook them; and the consequence of this difference of opinion was an attack upon the smaller party, who were compelled to secure themselves in the château and the palace. The citizens then took the affair into their own hands, and sent a message to the king, declaring that they were willing to surrender, if he would only force the English to the same good intention. Dunois upon this immediately invested Fort Sainte Catherine, which surrendered; and then, presenting himself before the Porte de Martinuile, received in form the keys of the city. At this time the French forces are described to have been in glorious condition. "Never had a king so handsome an army," says the chronicler, "and so *leste* a company all at once, nor better equipped, nor so lavishly filled with lords, barons, knights, and squires." Before this power, the English, deserted by the citizens, could not stand; and having in vain attempted to obtain the terms which would have been accorded to them a few days before, they shut themselves up in the palace.

Siege was immediately laid to this place by the royal troops; and the Duke of Somerset, assaulted at once by famine and such fearful odds, opened anew negotiations with the king. It is an interesting trait in the manners of the time, that the duke was on both occasions his own messenger, and on the present one was accompanied by his duchess. It is recorded, that

he wore a long robe of figured velvet, trimmed with fur, and a vermilion cap of the same sort. From this embassy also he returned unsuccessful; and the siege was recommenced with greater vigour. New negotiations were then entered into, as things became more desperate, and continued for *ten days*; at the end of which time the duke surrendered.

The chronicler delights to linger upon the magnificence of the king's entry. The royal archers led the way, clothed in jackets of vermilion, red, white, and green, with helmet on head, and harness on limbs, and armed with swords and daggers. Then came the heralds, clothed in their coats of arms, and followed by trumpets and clarions, "which sounded so strongly as to make a great melody, and a very sweet thing to hear." The chancellor of France marched next, with a white horse led by two grooms, bearing on his back a small coffer containing the seals of the king. Charles himself then appeared, preceded by his two esquires. He was armed cap-a-pie, and his horse was covered from head to heel with a cloth of azure velvet, embroidered with golden fleurs-de-lis. The lords who followed him were dressed in all the colours of the rainbow; and in this state the party was met by the clergy of Rouen, including the four mendicant orders, singing *Te Deum laudamus*. "It is a thing certain, that the king was never escorted at any time by so handsome and richly clothed a chivalry, nor by so great a body of warriors and men-at-arms, as at this entrance into the city of Rouen." Among the things worthy of note which the procession fell in with, was an artificial stag,

which, “ by a great and rare artifice,” knelt before the king as he passed. There was also an *Agnus Dei* spouting wine from its horns ! Perhaps, however, the most interesting sight was that of the Duchess of Somerset and the Countess Dunois, with Talbot and the other English lords detained as hostages, gazing upon the cortège from a window.

## CHAPTER XII.

## NOTRE DAME AND SAINT OUEN.

ONCE on a time there was a dragon, and his name was Gargouille, and he lived in the forest of Rouvray. Every day he issued from his den as soon as the sun was up, and prowled about seeking whom he might devour. The husbandman in his fields, the priest at the altar, the maid at her spinning-wheel,—all were alike to him: he gobbled them up. He breakfasted at one village, dined at a second, supped at a third. Young or old, fat or lean, tough or tender,—it did not matter. A couple of youths were enough for breakfast; a man-at-arms, or a ploughman, with a few little boys and girls, sufficed for dinner and dessert; and a young Caletian lass afforded something light for supper. The country at last was thinned of provision; every day he had farther to go for his bite and sup; and at last Gargouille put his long snout, wistfully, but not rudely, over the walls of Rouen.

The citizens were dismayed. No man durst stir out of the town. If a young woman stole to the water-side to give her sweetheart the rendezvous (for young women in love—and when are they out of love?—have no fear), Gargouille was there. If little Tommy or Jacky let themselves down the ramparts to play at marbles in the road, or gather filberts in the wood (for little boys

have no sense), Gargouille was there. Every day somebody was missing. At last, Saint Romain, awaking one morning from a dose which the smell of the incense always threw him into, determined to take the matter in hand.

Being a priest, he could not fight the dragon himself, for "the church," we all know, "abhors blood;" and to send any innocent layman upon an errand of such doubtful result went against his conscience. He therefore demanded of the authorities a thief, and a murderer who had been already condemned to death; and with these heroes, as a cat's-paw, he marched away, on the day of the Ascension, to give battle to Gargouille. The thief, as might be expected, stole himself off; but the murderer, being used to killing, stood his ground. Saint Romain began to pray valiantly; and the dragon appeared.

Terrible was the conflict! The murderer's lance had little effect upon the scale-armour of his opponent; but, on the other hand, his own defensive gear sufficed for his protection. The mark of Cain was upon his forehead, and Gargouille rather declined eating him. At last, alarmed by the noise made by Saint Romain, who redoubled his invocations, the monster turned his head to see what was the matter. That motion was fatal. The lance of his opponent entered between the wrinkles of the neck, and, glancing downwards, severed the œsophagus, penetrated the upper portion of the right lung, and buried itself in the heart. Gargouille, with a roar that made the whole forest shudder, immediately gave up the ghost.

In memory of this deed the clergy of Rouen were granted by King Dagobert the privilege—they and their successors for ever—of delivering a prisoner every year on the day of the Ascension. At first it did not matter of what crime the individual chosen had been convicted; but Henri Quatre, too much of a Protestant to be well read in his Catholic legends, excluded murderers, traitors, heretics, and coiners, from the benefit of the act. The “for ever” of King Dagobert extended only to the revolution.

It is meet that the reader should be acquainted with these facts, before setting out on his second tour through the curiosities of Rouen; for the very first object we come to is the monument of Saint Romain, and the place where a condemned prisoner was liberated every year according to ancient usage. A vast building, called the Halles, lies to the right of the Rue de Bec, which turns up from the quay; and before it is the Vieille Tour, on the first stage of which the *levée de la fierte*, or elevation of the shrine, took place, which delivered a prisoner from the doom his crimes had received.

Fifteen days before the Rogations, four canons paraded, in their ecclesiastical robes, to the various high courts of the city, to give notice of their privilege, in order that no criminal should be executed between that day and the one on which their claim was to be made. During the three rogation-days, two canon-priests, accompanied by the registrar of the chapter and two chaplains, preceded by the verger in cap and gown, with his silver mace, visited the prisons of the city and



fauxbourgs, to receive the confessions of such prisoners as put in a claim to the privilege.

On Ascension-day the chapter assembled, and after reading the confessions, proceeded to the choice of an individual most worthy of their temporal salvation. They then sent his name to the parliament, assembled in the palace in their red robes. The parliament having given its approbation, the confessions of the other prisoners were formally burnt in the hall of the chapter; and all being ready, the clergy of the metropolitan church walked in procession to the Vieille Tour, carrying the shrine before them containing the relics of Saint Romain. Here the prisoner was brought in by the chaplain, to whom he had been delivered by the parliament; the holy shrine was raised; at the signal his fetters were knocked off; and he walked back with the priests to the metropolitan church, where mass was celebrated. The next day a lecture was publicly read to him touching the horror of his crime; and after another mass, celebrated in the chapel of Saint Romain, he was set at liberty.

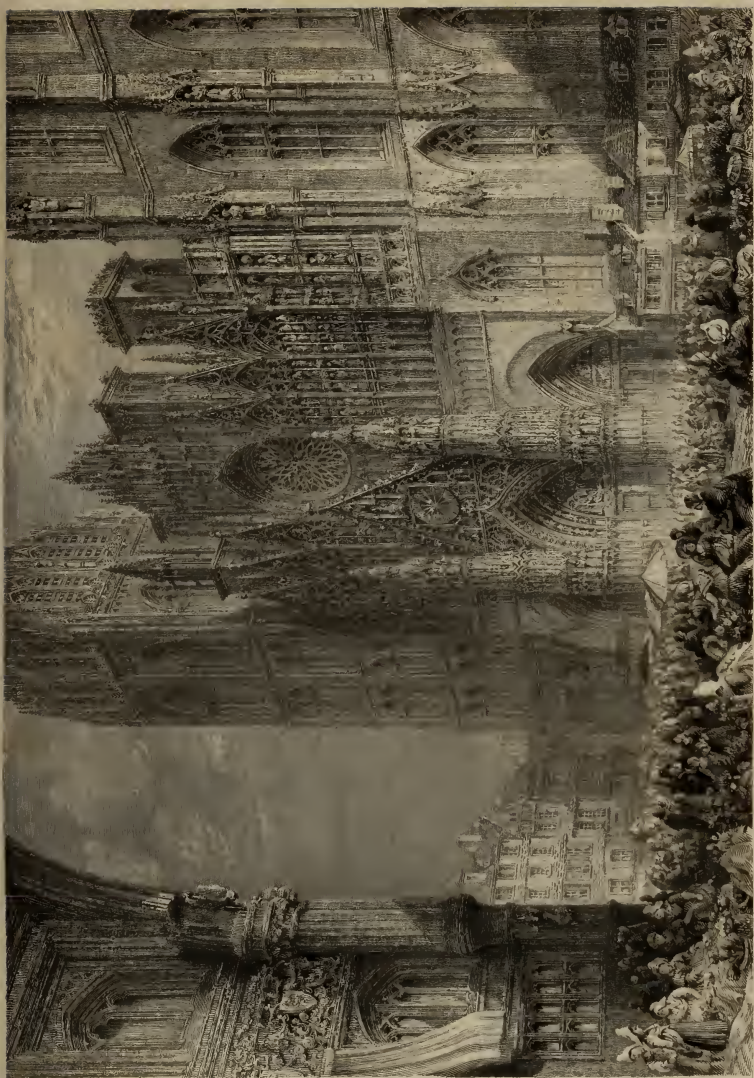
On the site of the Halles there stood a palace built by Richard I., the grandson of Rollo; and by its side a tower was afterwards elevated, which served as a state prison, and was distinguished from more modern constructions by the name of the Vieille Tour. The monument we have mentioned is supposed to be the remains of the building which is pointed out by historians as the place where John Lackland assassinated his young nephew with his own hands.

The Halles, or market-halls, are themselves ancient,

dating from the thirteenth century ; and it is to them a stranger must still betake himself who would obtain an accurate idea of the wealth, industry, and animation of the Norman capital. A hall is set apart for each of the staple kinds of merchandise ; and the scene of bustle presented in them all is hardly surpassed either in England or the Netherlands. The whole population of the country, as well as the town, seems congregated in one spot. There is the place to study costume and physiognomy ; and there you find the descendant of the Norman pirates truly at home—behind his counter.

The Rue Malpalu, behind the Halles, leads us to the church of Saint Maclou, a structure of the fifteenth century, possessing a beautiful Gothic staircase, and the memory of an elegant spire. Near this is the cathedral, to which no direction is required.

It is impossible to contemplate the façade of this remarkable edifice without wonder, and to describe it is altogether out of the question. The innumerable details of Gothic architecture, individually insignificant, yet grand and harmonious in their union, are here lavished with a profusion which confuses both the eye and the brain. To view it *quietly*, you would require to stand far enough off for the ornaments to lose their individuality, yet near enough for them to retain their effect. But this golden mean, unhappily, is not to be attained. At Rouen, as elsewhere, these gorgeous monuments of the olden time are obscured by a mass of paltry habitations crowding round their base, like the vulgar parasites that infest the antechamber of a king. Perhaps in the fine study of Turner annexed,





the reader will see the cathedral better than if he stood at the fountain of Notre Dame.

The gorgeous façade we have mentioned was constructed in about twenty years, towards the middle of the sixteenth century, by the first Cardinal d'Amboise. The bas-reliefs above the doors, although much injured in the religious war of 1562, are highly curious. The middle one contains the genealogical tree of Jesse, which is a grand scriptural support of the Catholics in their adoration of the Virgin. It seems to us, however, to be the genealogy, not of Mary, but of her earthly husband. The bas-relief on the left contains the history of the decapitation of Saint John. The daughter of Herodias is represented dancing before the king *on her hands*; and the executioner is seen ready to strike off the martyr's head, which is thrust through a window for that purpose.

The northern tower of the façade was constructed at different epochs, but its base is thought to be the most ancient part of the whole edifice. The southern is called the Tour de Beurre, to commemorate its origin. It was built by a fund collected by the archbishop, from the proceeds of a sale of permissions to eat butter during Lent. The indulgence was obtained from Innocent VIII. The Cardinal d'Amboise, desiring that so superb and holy a tower should possess "the handsomest bell in the kingdom," presented to the chapter four thousand livres for the purpose of founding one. A bell was accordingly put up, whose clapper weighed seven hundred and ten pounds—the bell declaring, in an inscription, its own weight:—



JE SUIS NOMMEE GEORGE D'AMBOISE,  
 QUI BIEN TRENTÉ SIX MILLE POISE,  
 ET CIL QUI BIEN ME POISERA  
 QUARANTE MILLE Y TROUVERA.

Two hundred and thirty years after, the clapper broke loose and came thundering down. It was replaced by one four feet nine inches in circumference. The decree, however, had gone forth. The bell cracked in 1786 at the sight of the fated king, Louis XVI. He did not take warning! Seven years after, his head rolled on the scaffold, and the bell was pulled down and cast into cannon. Nay, the congeniality in their destiny continued even after this double work of destruction was completed; for the outrages heaped upon the remains of the king were perpetuated on those of his monitor. Medals were struck from some fragments that remained, bearing this insulting inscription:—

MONUMENT DE VANITE  
 DETRUIT POUR L'UTILITE  
 L'AN DEUX DE L'EGALITE.

The Portail des Libraires, on the north of the transept, was so called on account of the number of booksellers at each side of the court, which was formerly a cemetery. The sculptures on this part of the church are very odd, and some not very delicate. One of them represents a man reclining negligently on his elbow, and leaning his head in his hand. It is a pig's head.

The interior of the church, besides the grandeur of its proportions, is remarkable for its painted windows and its tombs. One of the most interesting of the latter



is in the chapel du Petit Saint Romain. It is the tomb of Rollo! The following inscription is on a marble table above the arcade:—

HIC POSITUS EST  
 ROLLO,  
 NORMANNIÆ A SE TERRITÆ, VASTATÆ,  
 RESTITUTÆ  
 PRIMUS DUX, CONDITOR, PATER,  
 A FRANCONI ARCHIEP. ROTOM.  
 BAPTISATUS ANNO DCCCCXII.  
 OBIIT ANNO DCCCCXVII.  
 OSSA IPSIUS IN VETERI SANCTUARIO  
 NUNC CAPITE NAVIS PRIMUM  
 CONDITA  
 TRANSLATO ALTARI, COLLOCATA  
 SUNT A B. MAURILIO, ARCHIEP. ROTOM.  
 AN. MLXIII.

The most curious thing in the inscription is, that the date of Rollo's death is wrong by fifteen years! M. Dubois, and almost all other writers, fix upon 932 as the proper epoch.

Another of the twenty-five chapels which surround the interior of this vast temple is that of Sainte Anne, which contains the remains of William Longue-Épée, the son of Rollo, with an inscription to nearly the same effect as the preceding. The choir of the cathedral, which, if we are to believe history, is rich in heroic dust, presents only three inscriptions, and these are modern.\*

The chapel of the Virgin is of course filled with

\* Among others, the heart of Richard Cœur de Lion was buried on the right of the grand altar.

sepulchral pomp. The mausoleum of De Brezé is a very magnificent specimen of the arts in the sixteenth century. It was raised to him by his *faithful* spouse Diana of Poitiers, the mistress of Henri II.—

“Indivulsa tibi quondam et fidissima conjux,  
Ut fuit in thalamo, sic erit in tumulo!”

One of the least lying inscriptions we ever read upon a monument; for the chaste Diana was just as much *indivulsa* and *fidissima* to the grave of her husband, as she had been to his bed—directing her body to be interred in the Château d’Anet, presented to her by her royal lover.

Above the altar is the Adoration of the Shepherds, a picture by Philippe de Champagne, much, and we think justly, admired.

On leaving the cathedral, we pause for a moment in the Rue Saint Romain, which runs along its north side, to contemplate an ancient house which forms No. 80 of the street; and then proceed into the Rue des Carmes, commencing at the corner of the Place from which we entered the church. In this street the ancient *Chambre des Comptes* is worth looking at; but the next turning to the right leads to the desecrated abbey of Saint Amand, which is still more so.

This monastery, founded in the eleventh century, and richly endowed by the French kings, is now let in mean lodgings! A wooden building, however, covered with sculptures, and some other pageants, still demands the traveller’s attention. In 1800, while they were demolishing the church of the abbey, a leaden coffin

was found in one of the vaults, and on being opened disclosed a human body in the most perfect state of preservation. It was the body of the abbess Anne de Souvré, who had died one hundred and fifty years before.

The workmen robbed her of her ring and cross, and then threw her into a deep pit, where she landed on her feet, and stood upright. The circumstance was curious. There was something so strange and ghastly in the scene, that a crowd soon gathered round; and, from peeping in at the dead antique in her attitude of life, at length by degrees gained courage enough to draw her out. Her face was as fresh as if she had died yesterday. The people cried, "A miracle!" Some threw themselves on their knees, and some kissed the lips that had been closed for a century and a half. The desire at last arose among the people of possessing relics of the saint. Her veil was first detached, and torn in pieces by the eager devotees; then her gown created a scuffle; and, finally, when she was stripped of every article of clothing, even a portion of her ears was cut off! Night separated the combatants. The successful vanished with their spoils, and the others slunk off one by one in despair mingled with superstitious fear; till Anne de Souvré was left naked and alone in the darkness of night. The next morning the whole town rushed to the spot as soon as it was daylight. The abbess was found where she had been left, but as black as ebony. The authorities met with no interruption in removing the body for interment; and before the end of the day, the only evidence of what had occurred was

the ceaseless cry of the hawkers selling hundreds and thousands of pieces of serge and black crape as the relics of the *bienheureuse* Anne de Souvré.

A little way to the north of Saint Amand, and easily distinguished by its graceful spire, is the church of Saint Ouen, which belonged to the most ancient abbey in Rouen and in Normandy. It was founded in the year 533, destroyed by the Normans in 841, and rebuilt by Rollo. A curious and not unpleasing trait of ancient manners is related in evidence of the early celebrity of the monastery. The Emperor Otho, it is said, when besieging Rouen, demanded of its defender, Richard Sans Peur, permission to enter the town in order to pay his vows at the holy shrine. A passport was accordingly granted; the chivalrous emperor entered, without fear and without risk, into the stronghold of his enemy; and, having finished his devotions, coolly returned to give orders for an assault on the city.

In 1046 the whole edifice then subsisting was demolished, to make room for a new basilica; and after a labour of eighty years the latter was at length completed, when an accidental fire burnt it to the ground. In 1318 the first stone was laid of the present building, although it was not till the commencement of the sixteenth century that this great work was completed, which is to-day the boast of Rouen, and the admiration of all strangers.

Among the monuments in the chapels is one to Alexandre de Berneval, one of the architects of the church, to which an improbable, or at all events an untrue, story is attached, although quoted frequently on

the authority of Dom Pommeraye, the grave historian of the abbey. The two roses of the great window, as the learned Benedictine tells us, were constructed in the year 1439, one by Alexandre Berneval, and one by his apprentice. The latter, unfortunately for all parties, was the most beautiful; the connoisseurs were never weary of admiring it, while they treated with comparative neglect the work of the master. This preyed so deeply upon Berneval, that at last a jealous frenzy took possession of his soul, and he murdered his pupil. He was tried for the crime, found guilty, and executed; but in consideration of the benefits which his art had rendered the church, the holy fathers of Saint Ouen made interest with public justice to obtain the body of the criminal, which they interred in the second chapel, the same as if he had died the death of the righteous.

The present Hôtel de Ville (formerly the dormitory of the monks) adjoins the south side of the church, and contains, in its second floor, the library and museum of the city. The library, which boasted at first two hundred and fifty thousand volumes, counts at present only thirty thousand, with eleven hundred manuscripts. One of the latter weighs seventy-three pounds, and kept the laborious author in occupation thirty years.

Going out of the Place Saint Ouen by the same passage by which we entered, and proceeding along the Rue de Robec, we turn, by and by, to the right, and arrive at the prison commonly called the Bicêtre. Opposite this building, towards the east, is the Hospice Générale, which we have mentioned in speaking of the Hôtel Dieu. Its most interesting feature is the



reception it affords to foundlings. These poor little creatures, to the number of seven or eight hundred every year, are put into a box in the wall, which, when the bell is rung, turns towards the interior. The prize thus found by the hospital is sent either to Neufchâtel or the Bourg Achard, to be nursed.

Rejoining the line of road carried along the edge of the river, and called the Quai de Paris below the bridge, and the Cours Dauphin above it, we find ourselves again within sight of our hôtel, but yet not much fatigued with a walk that has exercised the mind more than the body. We are tempted by an idle boat lying at the breast, and whose owner is willing to earn a few sous, to launch upon the same waters where the fleet of Rollo once rode in triumph, and to land upon the Ile de la Croix, the island which serves as a support for the new stone bridge. Our spirit of adventure increasing by indulgence, we now cross to the opposite *terra firma*, and there we are fully repaid for the perils we have run. Rouen is before us in a new aspect. The same towers of Notre Dame, the same tower of Saint Ouen, the same shapeless mass of Saint Maclou, are painted against the sky; but each assumes a new form, and is impressed with a new character. On this spot Turner stood. Why can we not exchange our pen for a pencil?

Following the Grand Cours, we recross the river by the bridge, and find ourselves again on the Quai de Paris, and again at the door of our hôtel.







## CHAPTER XIII.

## MONT SAINTE CATHERINE.

THE few remaining objects which can come into so brief a summary as ours are too distant, and too far between, and, indeed, comparatively speaking, too unimportant, to admit of being arranged in a separate tour. Should the stranger, notwithstanding, have time for a longer and less productive walk, let him, by all means, ascend the line of street commencing on the quay with the Rue Grand Pont, till he almost completely intersects the town. He will find at last the Rue Beffroi on the left, behind which is the church of Saint Godard, where that archbishop was buried in a subterranean chapel in the year 533. The stained windows are very beautiful; and, among the subjects, it is hoped he will see with peculiar interest the adventure of Saint Romain with our friend Gargouille.

The tomb of Saint Godard was removed to the church of Saint Romain (at some distance to the north, beyond the boulevards), where it still remains, and in a very singular situation—forming, in fact, the master-altar in the choir, being surmounted only by the tabular piece. There the painted windows are still more numerous, if not more valuable, than in the former church; and among the representations we find again

the combat of Gargouille, together with the procession of the Fierle.\*

Near the church of Saint Godard, in the garden of the Ursuline dames in the Rue Morand, there is an old tower, the only fragment existing of a spacious fortress built by Philippe Auguste on the demolition of the *Vieille Tour* described above. It was in a tower, long since demolished, of this *château*, that the heroic Maid was imprisoned before her execution.

Another old tower close by, at the side of the boulevards, called the *Tour Bigot*, is worth seeing. So also is the church of Saint Patrice, which is within sight, on account of its painted windows. In the fourteenth century, a brotherhood of the Passion of our Lord was instituted here, who walked in procession every year, on Good Friday, with children in the character of angels carrying the cross, the nails, the sponge, and other instruments of the Passion. Two centuries after, a great improvement was made upon this show. The holy lists were thrown open to the poets, and the above articles, when done with, were bestowed in prizes upon the best makers of verses on the Passion of our Lord. There was, however, a little malice in the distribution. He who set him down in the epic throne was honoured with a crown of thorns; a rod was bestowed upon the ballad-monger; and the small sonneteer received—a sponge.

The first turning from the Rue Saint Patrice is the

\* The stranger at Rouen will do well to provide himself with M. E. H. Langlois' work—"Mémoire sur la Peinture-sur-verre et sur quelques Vitraux remarquables des Eglises de Rouen."

Rue Etoupée, where there is an antique house that claims a passing glance: the second leads to the Rue des Bons Enfants, where a marble table in the wall of No. 134 informs us that there Fontenelle entered into one of his plurality of worlds.

The church of Saint Gervais is at the farthest point of the suburbs in this direction—or rather altogether beyond them. Here, in the crypt beneath the choir, the two first archbishops of Rouen were buried; here, according to some authors, William the Conqueror was carried to die;\* and here some small, and now subterranean, remains of the Roman road are seen which connected Juliobona and the ancient Rothomagus—the only traces visible in this city of the “masters of the world.”

Our street wanderings are now finished on the south bank of the river.† It is necessary, however, to devote a few minutes to the opposite fauxbourg of Saint Sever—and a very few will suffice.

The infantry barracks near the south end of the bridge of boats are not remarkable in themselves; but the esplanade before them is a locality which should not be altogether forgotten. On this spot there stood a small fort, the origin of which is unknown, surrounded by the waters of the Seine; and on its ruins our Henry V. constructed an edifice called indifferently the Petit Château and the Barbican, the name of its

\* According to others, he died at Fecamp, on the sea-coast of the Pays de Caux.

† The stranger who desires more minute local details should possess M. Licquet's “*Précis de l'Histoire de Rouen.*”



predecessor. When the old stone bridge, which it protected, was falling into decay, the same prince ordered the château to be demolished, and the materials, together with the ground on which it stood, to be given to the magistrates of the town, on condition of their repairing the bridge. The gift, however, was not accepted; the bridge at length disappeared; and the château was not destroyed till late in the last century, when its walls were levelled, its ditches filled up, and its site planted with trees.

From the esplanade a street leads to the church of Saint Sever, which is only remarkable on account of the oddity of its origin. Saint Sever was the bishop of Avranches, at the other extremity of Normandy, and a person of such sanctity that his tomb was the frequent resort of pilgrims. Among others, there went to the holy place two priests of Rouen, who were seized all on a sudden with the desire of stealing the body of the saint. They were at first prevented by the guardians of the dead; but returning to Rouen, and obtaining the sanction of Duke Richard I. to the robbery, they presented themselves again at Avranches, and, notwithstanding the resistance and lamentations of the inhabitants, succeeded in carrying off the booty. Every now and then, however, on the road, the holy bones became so heavy, that all their exertions to raise the shrine were vain, till they had made a vow to erect a chapel on the spot. The same miracle took place for the last time at the bourg of Emendreville; where a church was accordingly erected, which, as well as the town, received from that day the name of Saint Sever.



From this church the Rue du Pré conducts to the Caserne Bonne Nouvelle, which is the cavalry barracks of Rouen. It stands upon the site of an ancient priory, said to have been founded by Matilda, the wife of the Conqueror, when she heard the "good news" of the victory of Hastings, which made her a queen.

Returning to the church of Saint Sever, a road conducts us to the hospital of Saint Yon; the church of which was built by the brotherhood of the Christian school founded by Laval, without the assistance either of architects or workmen. It is now a lunatic asylum, said to be conducted upon admirable principles both of science and humanity.

This is all, perhaps, which the town of Rouen and its faubourgs afford of real interest to the stranger; but the walks in the neighbourhood, so far as the prospects are concerned, are among the finest in France. The city is surrounded to the east, south, and west, by a chain of hills, of which the superb Mont Sainte Catherine, advancing like a promontory into the vast valley of the Seine, is the chief and monarch.

On the Sunday morning before we left Rouen, to follow, on the opposite bank, the course of the river to the sea, we wandered to the top of this remarkable steep. The plateau is intersected in different directions by great mounds of earth, the artificial appearance of which impresses the spectator with the idea that he is treading upon the ruins of distant ages. There is hardly a stone visible, however, except in one spot, where a narrow fragment of wall, completely isolated, stands tall and threatening. The silence and solitude of the

place, the desolation that reigns around, the loftiness of the mount, where the atmosphere already is thin and chill, while the world below is fainting with heat—in fine, the air of *mystery* which hangs over the scene—all conspire to lead back our thoughts to the age of the Druids, when every forest contained an altar, and every mountain-top was a temple.

But the indications we find of this terrible superstition are rather moral than physical. The phenomena we observe belong to the era of the Redeemer; for here stood, at different epochs, the abbey of the Holy Trinity and the priory of Saint Michel; and here was the fort in which the Marquis de Villars withstood the assaults of Henri Quatre. All are now vanished; the very stones are buried in the earth of a new age—all, except a tottering fragment, which, in a few years, perhaps in a few months, we shall look for in vain.

The destruction of Fort Sainte Catherine was demanded by the citizens themselves, whom it had been accustomed to annoy more severely than it did their enemies; and Henri Quatre, in complying, remarked, “I want no other ramparts than the affections of my subjects.” It is here that Catherine de Medicis, surrounded by her maids of honour, was an eye-witness of the siege of Rouen by Charles IX., and an actor in the barbarities to which it led. But it was here also that the Catholic leader, Guise, put in practice one of the rarest virtues of the age—forgiveness.

“I wish to shew you,” said he (as Montaigne reports), addressing himself to a Protestant gentleman, who had intended to assassinate him; “I wish to shew

you how much more merciful is my religion than the one you profess: yours counselled you to kill me — mine commands me to pardon you.”

At the front of the mount, the picture of the magnificent valley of the Seine develops itself at our feet. The river, spotted with islands, on which are houses, gardens, and pastures, forms an immense peninsula, which appears to be a dead and dreary flat, with marshes at the edges, and the forest of Rouvray in the middle. This peninsula is shut in, amphitheatrically, by loftier ground, some portions of which are flanked by the same curious kind of ridges which we noticed at Jumièges. On the right bank, enclosed by a semicircle of hills, stands the city of Rouen.

The only prominent towers or spires are those of Notre Dame and Saint Ouen; and thus there is one great adjunct wanting in the magnificence of a city; yet it is rarely we meet with a more splendid picture. Here and there are those daubs of colour which give so much character to a French town; but, owing to the height of our position, the dark roofs of the houses fill up a considerable portion of the space; and thus a sombre shade prevails over the scene. This is increased by the gloomy mass of the cathedral, towering in priestly pomp above the whole; and, gazing as we do now from this lofty and lonely spot, surrounded by the relics of bygone ages, we feel an impression of awe stealing over our meditations.

The denizens of the city, stirring like ants below us, add to this impression; for we cannot see the vulgar details of their occupations, or hear their tiny voices.

Our imagination feels itself at liberty — our very lungs play more boldly and freely than usual in this bright and boundless atmosphere. The associations of history begin to mingle even with our outward perceptions, till at length we hardly know which is the object of our gaze — the past or the present.

The fauxbourg of Saint Sever has disappeared, and marshes and waste-lands extend towards the interior of the peninsula, where they are lost in the hoary forest of Ronmare. A single bridge of massive stone spans the river, and is guarded on the opposite bank by the stern fortress of the Barbican. Instead of the broad and shady alleys of the boulevards, a thick wall encompasses the city, flanked by a deep ditch. At the commencement of the further end of the wall, at the river's edge, there is the tower of Mal-s'y-frotte; nearer us, on the same line, the Vieille Tour of Richard the Fearless; and at the northern extremity of the walls, the Vieux Château of Philip Augustus. It is a city of war we see before us. It is the Rouen of the middle ages, surrounded by the fortifications which befit a stronghold of feudal power.

But in another moment the illusion vanishes; towers, walls, and ditches disappear; and the clang of innumerable church-bells comes tumultuously on the breeze. It is the Sabbath; and these solemn sounds invite the faithful to prayer. But, hark! There is also, mingling with the mezzuin-calls of the temple, the roll of the drum, the braying of the hoarse trumpet, and the fierce shouts of human voices. It is the Sabbath; and these announcements proclaim that the

various spectacles are about to open, and particularly that a great fight is just commencing in the fauxbourg Saint Sever, of bulls, dogs, bears, and men.

Nor are the Sunday strollers absent even here ; but the air is cold, the place remote, and even solemn ; and our companions, therefore, are few. Some we can see walking in pairs (*solus cum solâ*) through the ditches of the buried fortress ; the happy lover every now and then finding an apology in the abrupt inequalities of the path for passing his arm round his mistress's waist. Turning away at length, we gaze frowningly for a moment on a little ugly, incongruous brick erection, on the very highest spot of the plateau—the nature and no-meaning of which we cannot tell—and then descend the mount in another direction, in order to return townward by the great road.

The villages are all animation. Crowds of gaily dressed men, women, and children, of the lower rank, are hastening from the town, and vanishing into the numerous taverns and cabarets that line the road. The windows of these open ; and we hear the sound of laughter and music within, mingled ever and anon with the gush of cider, the pistol-like report of beer, and the more soberly alluring plunk ! of wine-corks. As we get nearer the town, the crowd increases, till the scene resembles a fair. The road is bordered with stalls, provided with wheels-of-fortune, at which the Norman lass boldly ventures her solid sous for empty hopes. Chivalrous sex ! ever losing, yet ever risking. Sometimes it is the lover who deposits the stake. His ungrateful mistress will not thank him if she is unfor-



tunate; but no matter, it is not the last of his money that will be spent in the purchase of disappointment. Among the rest, beggars throng the road, chanting their ceaseless litanies; and many a sol, dropped into the extended hat for the love of God, purchases permission of the donor's conscience to go to the devil for the evening.

We at length traverse the Cours Dauphin, passing the Champ de Mars and the Jardin des Plantes. On the Quai de Paris various *affiches* on the walls flaunt before our eyes the programmes of the play and the exhibitions. Among the rest is that glorious fight of bulls, dogs, bears, and men! The scene of action is only at the other end of the bridge; the trumpet is braying in our ears. We step quickly from the trottoir into the street—but the sudden clang of a church-bell arrests us, like a twinge of remorse. “It is only a step,” whispers Sathanas in our ear. “Consider! bulls—dogs—bears—and men!”

Did we yield? Guess!



## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE LEFT BANK OF THE SEINE.

HAVING completed our wanderings on the right bank of the Seine, from its embouchure to Rouen, we set out the next morning to walk back again, on the left bank, from Rouen to its embouchure. We crossed the river, traversed the fauxbourg of Saint Sever, and, having thus suddenly emerged from the middle of a crowd composed of a hundred thousand of our fellows, we found ourselves wending, solitary and museful, towards the forest of Rouvray.

Often did this ancient forest resound to the halloo of the early dukes of Normandy. Under these shades, perhaps, the idea of the conquest of England was first conceived; for here William paused, in the midst of the chase, to learn from a messenger that King Edward was dead. In 1160, Henry the Second of England built a residence near the edge of the wood, where the successor of Rollo had erected palisades for an enclosure, or preserve, for game. Soon afterwards it became a léprosière, for the reception of noble lepers; the king, as an old historian informs us, having “une inclination grandement naturelle pour les pauvres lépreux.” After various fortunes, the whole building was destroyed at the commencement of the revolution, with

the exception of the church, which is still extant, though greatly injured.

Passing through two villages, the Petit and Grand Couronne, we arrive at a ruin, of which the origin and history are alike unknown. It is situated on one of the lofty conical hills so frequent on this bank, and which rises here in absolute isolation from the rest of the world. Some traces of ditches around; some fragments of enormous walls; a deep subterranean opening, vaulted with savage art,—and these are all. Formless and indefinite, it baffles conjecture; but when standing among the huge and shapeless ruins, gazing around from this proud eminence on the forests and villages beneath, and the Seine on the left flowing like the sea, we feel—we are *sure*—that some high, though lost or forgotten history must be connected with the soil.

If you inquire of the peasant who coasts carefully round the solitary hill at night-fall, he will tell you boldly, that these broken walls, which shew so strange and ghastly against the sky, belonged to the *château of Robert the Devil*. This personage, he will say, is still seen in our own time, wandering in his grave-clothes through the environs of the *château*, and visiting, above all, the site of its cemetery. Often, even in the daytime, a flash of more vivid lightning discloses for an instant the thin, filmy figure of the phantom gliding among the mounds; and its unearthly shriek is heard mingling with the voices of the storm. If, when the confusion of the elements is over, the startled witness, either in curiosity or incredulity, approaches the spot, his blood freezes in his veins when he observes that the

earth of one of the tumuli is loose, as if it had been removed and then replaced. Sometimes the phantom appears to the passer-by in the form of a wolf, looking down upon him, huge and gaunt, from the ruins. Sometimes his howl is heard at midnight, wild and high, in the forest; and at the sound, the terrified listener, praying and perspiring, creeps down under the bedclothes.

The old chroniclers of Normandy relate, that this Robert was the son of a certain Aubert, “the first duke,” and that he was surnamed the Devil, “pour les grans cruaultés et mauvaiseties dont il fut plain.” The first duke of history, however, was Rollo,—not in the reign of King Pepin, like the above, but a hundred and fifty years later; and the first Robert was the lover of Arlette. The latter, therefore, was, of course, discovered to be the true Robert the Devil.

And, indeed, in spite of the sneers of some authors, in our humble opinion, he richly deserved the name. He began his career by revolting against his brother. He was taken at the siege of Exmes, sword in hand, and pardoned by the generous Richard; whom, in token of gratitude, he soon after poisoned. He became, first the enemy, and then the friend of his dissolute uncle, the archbishop of Rouen; and, having conquered another holy churchman in battle, the bishop of Bayeux, he obliged him to ask pardon in his shirt, his feet naked, and a saddle on his back. He was never at rest, but always from war to war, from battle to battle; and at his battles no quarter was given—his wars were wars of extermination. He, at last, repent-

ing of his crimes, set out on a pilgrimage to Palestine, to scourge himself at the foot of the holy sepulchre. When returning, he was poisoned by his own servants; or, as others say, attacked by a fever, and died in Nicea.

It matters not, however, who was the true Robert the Devil; this was his château, whoever he might be. It was entire at the epoch of Philippe Auguste; and from its gloomy walls, if we may believe Guillaume le Breton, John Lackland went forth one night to assassinate his nephew Arthur in the Vieille Tour of Rouen. To-day its shapeless fragments are covered with ivy, and the "*herbe qui égare*." Wo to the luckless traveller who treads upon this creeper among tombs and ruins! In vain he tries to escape from the enchanted spot. Circling round the hill, he starts and trembles to find himself still near the château of Robert the Devil. The fruitless efforts continue all night; till at last, at his customary hour of prayer, as the holy words escape his lips habitually, the spell dissolves.

Traversing a long alley of poplars, we reach the village of La Bouille, from which passage-boats set out several times in the day for Rouen, for the accommodation of travellers from Pontaudemer and the department of Calvados. Near La Bouille is Caumont, celebrated for its quarries, which afford a beautiful and hard white stone. The quarry called Jacqueline is especially worthy the traveller's notice, being wrought in vast subterranean cavities, encrusted with crystals and stalactites.

From Caumont we pass the end of the forest of



THE GREAT BRIDGE AT BRIDGE

BRIDGE AT BRIDGE







Mauny, and proceed to Lendin, without being tempted to follow the sweep of the river. At Lendin we pause for a while to examine the curious ridges of the hill which impressed our imagination so vividly when at Jumièges, and to gaze upon the ruins of that famous abbey on the opposite bank. Crossing, at length, a portion of the vast forest of Brotonne, we arrive at La Mailleraie.

The delicious view annexed exhibits the appearance of this château from the river, with its groves and gardens. It is said that the beautiful La Vallière spent here some years of her early life; but no historical associations are connected with the spot,—unless we reckon one, its having had the honour of giving breakfast one morning to the Duchess de Berri. A marble column was raised (which unfortunately does not enter into our friend's drawing) in memory of the stupendous event.

At Vatteville, on the banks of the river, it is said the French kings of the Merovingian race had a palace. We could discover no ruins, however, nor any indication in the form of the ground to enable us even to hazard a conjecture with regard to its site.

Beyond this the famous bar of the Seine is seldom dangerous in our time; but as we get farther down, we find that a complete and sudden change takes place in the character of the river. The waters widen, and great sand-banks present themselves in the distance, seeming to shut up the navigation altogether. Still lower, these banks stretch along and across the river in every direction, forming numerous narrow channels,

that change almost every tide. Once a month a kind of general revolution takes place. The bar carries in with it immense quantities of sand, ground from the falaises that border the coast by the ceaseless action of the sea ; and this, forming a common stock with the deposits of the Seine, creates new accumulations. Over these the tide sweeps wildly in, presenting a mass of boiling waters twenty feet high ; and in the course of a few hours the whole aspect of the river is changed.

After this phenomenon, and even after the common daily tides, the pilots may be seen threading the mazes of the stream, sounding at every step, and exerting their utmost sagacity to discover the safest path for vessels. Their number amounts exactly to ninety-nine — never reaching a hundred ! In the same manner there used to be ninety-nine canons at Tours ; and at the moment in which we write, there are ninety-nine cows grazing in a field in Somers Town, one of the suburbs of London, which the owner, it is said, has in vain endeavoured to increase to a hundred ! In this last case, the very instant the hundredth cow is bought, another dies, or walks off in some way or other, to make room for it.

A hundred projects have been, and are, on foot for remedying these evils of the navigation of the Seine. Some have proposed that a canal should be dug from Villequier (a little higher up from where we now stand, and on the opposite bank) to Havre ; but the nature of the ground seems to set this out of the question. The canal in some places would have to be dug through solid rock, and, if brought near the river, would be

destroyed in the course of time by the current washing away its foundations.

Another canal has been projected, to commence on the left bank, at the spot where the influence of the bar ceases to be mischievous, and to be carried thence to Vieux Port, across the hill of Saint Leonard at Quilleboëuf, through the marshes of Vernier, over the lofty ground of Laroque, and along the borders of Berville and Fiquefleur to Harfleur. This canal would be twenty feet broad, and its estimated cost amounts to sixteen millions of francs.

But, even supposing the latter scheme to be practicable, say other projectors, it would accomplish comparatively only a very small object. Rouen is but the *entrepôt*. Paris is the ultimate centre to which we wish our goods to be conveyed, and our navies to float. The Seine, which from Rouen to Paris is impracticable for boats in the dry weather of summer, imperfect as it is, may be converted into a creek of the sea, which will make Paris a second London. The manner in which this consummation is to be effected discloses one of the most magnificent projects that can be conceived. The author, an engineer of Caen, proposes that a strong dyke should be built at the embouchure, extending from one bank to the other; by which means the bed of the river will always preserve its level—the bar will be unfelt—the sand-banks, and therefore the channel, will become permanent—and the force of the stream will be so far paralysed as to prevent new accumulations.

A dyke across the embouchure of the Seine seems an impossibility; but at Cherbourg they have attempted

similar impossibilities, “ yea, got the better of them.” It is not the depth of the water, nor the difficulty of building in the abysses of the sea, which renders the scheme, perhaps, more than doubtful; for the resources of human daring and ingenuity are now almost boundless. Could that huge Norman who conquered England at a blow arise from his grave to-day, what a pigmy he would think himself! How he would stare to see his descendants sailing in the air above his head, like a speck in the distant sky—or working coolly with the axe and the hammer many fathoms under the water—or sweeping, without sails, over the deep, in the very eye of the wind—or rushing along the road at the rate of forty miles an hour! But there are some difficulties which we cannot *yet* overcome. At Cherbourg the dyke was built upon rocks; at the mouth of the Seine we should have to build upon *sand*. Our knowledge is too imperfect to allow us to speak *ex cathedrâ* on the subject; but in our opinion there is many an argosy now rotting at the bottom of this sand, at a depth more than equal to the height of her own masts. But, even if the obstacles of nature could be overcome, those of human interest and passion would remain. Havre would not suffer itself to be destroyed without a cry that would alarm Europe; even the small voice of Honfleur would make itself heard; and the ninety-nine pilots of Quillebœuf would make common cause with the Tritons and Nereides.

Leaving these stupendous projects, however, to future generations, the French of to-day are expending their francs in the construction of a rail-road from Paris

to Havre. This we cannot help considering a very useless and foolish enterprise, entered into, like some similar undertakings in England, without knowledge or consideration. Steam-carriages, which will eventually become general in all civilised countries, do not necessarily require a rail-road. They require precisely such a road as they have at present in almost all the great thoroughfares of France—a good solid highway, paved with hard stones. The public-spirited enterprise of Sir Charles Dance, and those of Colonel Macerone and Mr. Squire, have proved this fact to a demonstration; and we were ourselves a party in a little experimental expedition, performed by the latter gentlemen, under circumstances which deserve to be communicated to the public both of France and England.

Drawn one day out of a hut on Bushey Heath, by the appearance of an unusual commotion among the few inhabitants of the village, we saw a steam-coach which had stopped at the door of the public house. The apparition of a vehicle of this kind in such a place was unaccountable. A balloon would not have surprised us; but the idea of steam was associated in our minds only with that of rails, flat ground, or the level ocean. Bushey Heath forms the plateau of a mountain which is the highest point of *terra firma* in Middlesex; and, although so far inland, serves as a land-mark for vessels at sea. The access to it from the London side is by a road far steeper and more difficult than the one by which we once climbed over the Simplon into Italy.

While meditating on a phenomenon which left our philosophy at fault, we were accosted by Colonel Mace-



rone, in whom we were glad to recognise an old acquaintance; and in reply to our questions, he informed us that, although the roads were in a peculiarly bad state, the journey had been performed with perfect ease—adding, that it was his intention to proceed to Watford. Now, if the road from Edgware to Bushey Heath was steep and difficult, the descent from Bushey Heath to Edgware was much worse. A portion of it, more especially, called Clay Hill, we knew to be absolutely precipitous, and not only so, but of a soft and treacherous nature, answering to its name. When ascending this hill to the Heath, it is requisite even for the light stage-coaches drawn by four horses to employ the service of a fifth horse, in order to surmount the difficulty. We told our friend that he might, no doubt, *go* by steam to Watford, but that we were quite certain he would not *return* by the same means of locomotion. Nevertheless, at his pressing instances, we consented to hazard our own person in the adventure.

We set off, amidst the cheers of the villagers, at a pace about equal to that of the gallop of a stage-coach. The motion was so steady that we could have read or taken notes with the greatest ease; and the noise, so disagreeable to passers-by, was not at all so great to us as that of a common vehicle.

On arriving at the somewhat sudden commencement of the descent of Clay Hill, the local inexperience of the attendant (who had never been on this road before) led him to be guilty of a neglect which might have been followed by troublesome consequences. He



did not descend to perform the operation which, in another kind of coach, is called "clogging the wheel," till it became impossible. The impetus already acquired by a vehicle of such enormous weight was irresistible; and we went thundering down the steep at a rate, it was supposed, of not less than thirty miles an hour.

Fortunately there was nothing in the way; but even if there had been other carriages in the road, we are not prepared to say that any accident would have occurred. Our impression, indeed, is quite on the other side. Mr. Squire, who acted as steersman, never lost his presence of mind for an instant; and the huge vehicle—speed only excepted—appeared to be as docile in his hands as a lady's pony.\* It may be conceived what amazement an apparition of this kind, flashing through the village of Bushey, occasioned among the inhabitants. The people seemed petrified. The front of the carriage, without horses, or other apparent means of locomotion—the line of black smoke streaming like a flag behind us—and the calm faces of the colonel and his partner in front, as each continued quietly to smoke his segar, were alike unaccountable.

In the busy and populous town of Watford the sensation was similar. The men gazed in a grave and speechless wonder; the women, less reflective but more generous, clapped their hands, and screamed for their

\* While writing the above, we observe by the newspapers that Sir Charles Dance has solved the problem with regard to the practicability of these carriages traversing the streets of London without danger to the passers-by. A steam omnibus has also begun to ply regularly on the crowded thoroughfare of the City Road.

brothers and husbands to come and see. We at length “put about,” at the farther end of the line of street, in magnificent style; and, as we commenced our return, were greeted with one long shout from the whole population.

Our evil augury, we are happy to say, was not verified. We ascended Clay Hill at the same rate which is performed every day by the stage-coaches with five horses; and if the road had been hard, or even covered in the soft places with broken granite, our speed would have been far greater. There was indeed a momentary stop; but this was caused by one of the wheels not being firmly enough fixed to the body of the vehicle.\* We at length regained our starting-place in the firm persuasion that we had witnessed the commencement of a revolution which will one day change the whole face of Europe, and produce results, moral, social, and political, so gigantic as to be beyond the grasp even of the imagination.

The expense of running these carriages, as Colonel Macerone informed us, compared with that of the four-horse stages, is as one penny to a shilling. The difference will be still greater in France, where fuel is

\* In this state the wheel turns round with immense velocity without producing motion in the carriage; but it is customary, before ascending a steep hill, to lock the wheels so as to prevent their getting loose. Without this peculiarity of construction, which permits the wheels to be disunited at pleasure from the axle-tree, a steam-carriage would be a very dangerous machine indeed. It might take the fancy, for instance, when the steam rose, of proceeding on the journey without the concurrence of the owner, who would thus find himself carried off as if by magic—or the artificial leg of Mynheer von Wodenblock.

cheaper in comparison than corn. In France, too, the roads are ready made ; while most of ours in England would be impassable in their present state in a rainy winter. As for rail-roads, they are excellent in a perfectly flat country ; but down hill they will be dangerous in the extreme, and up hill almost absolutely useless, except for carriages drawn by horses. To understand this, it is only necessary to consider for an instant that, when the horse is the moving power, he walks between the rails on a road adapted to his feet, and only demands that the wheels shall glide over a surface so smooth as to present no impediment to their progress. In the case of steam, the moving power resides in the body of the carriage, and it propels only by turning the wheels ; which therefore require, in ascending, a firm and uneven surface, in order to give them a hold, as it were, of the road.

If this is a digression, it cannot be considered a very irrelevant one in the narrative of a traveller. If our book, however, shall last a century, (and, unless the plates are detached, we think it will,) the above account of our “ expedition ” will be read with a smile. At that time, steam-coaches will traverse the civilised countries of Europe from end to end ; steam-ships will circumnavigate the globe ; and the descendant of Sir Charles Dance will come into town from his seat at Bushey in a steam-gig.

## CHAPTER XV.

## QUILLEBŒUF.

LEAVING behind us the dark forest of Brotonne, we at length arrived at two little hamlets, placed near each other on the banks of the river—Aiziers and Vieux Port. The latter forms the subject of the annexed view, taken from the river; but although the beauty of the scene is enhanced by the vessels, whose reflections are seen so strikingly contrasted in the calm wave, yet the moral effect of *our* Vieux Port is absent. In fact, the impression made upon the spectator by almost any scene in nature depends entirely upon accidental and evanescent circumstances. An author may write, “here stands a church, there a castle, and yonder a grove;” and his description, if correct, will be acknowledged to be so; but if he endeavours, at the same time, to convey a moral picture which shall determine the character of the view, either his fidelity or his taste will be questioned by every succeeding visitor. The residence that is the most cheerful in summer—the most animate with all the sights and sounds of that bountiful season—the verdure of the woods, the song of birds, and the quietly musical voices of cattle—is, in precisely the same ratio, gloomy and desolate in winter. But, without seeking an extreme case, we need only refer to the one before us.



Drawn by M. W. Turner. R. A.

Engraved by R. P. Peckham.





Vieux Port presented itself to our eyes without a single sail near it; its small neat cottages were only seen at intervals through the foliage. A young girl, lying asleep under a tree, was the only living object in the picture—all was silence, simplicity, and peace. It seemed to us to be a spot where a man, when wearied with the world, might retire to rest and to dream. On the opposite bank there are a few houses scattered here and there, but all at some distance from the river.

The inhabitants of these two hamlets derive their subsistence chiefly from fishing, and it is therefore needless to add that they are poor. This thankless occupation is still less productive in the little ports of the Seine than elsewhere in France. The nets commonly used in the river are made in the form of a bag, the opening of which is attached to two poles planted in the water, one at each side. As the bag hangs down perpendicularly by its own weight, it is very seldom that any fish find their way into it till the coming in of the tide. When this occurs, the stream, rushing rapidly upwards, places the net in a horizontal position, its mouth opening to swallow the rushing waters, with which it devours, at the same time, the victims whose evil destiny has thrown them in the way. When the returning tide rushes *down* the river, the contrary action, withstood by the weight of the fish contained in the bag, naturally shuts the mouth, and thus the captives are held fast till they find that they have passed “out of the frying-pan into the fire;” which in their case means out of the water into the frying-pan.

The fish taken in this manner are chiefly small and

of little value, but sometimes a salmon rejoices the heart of the poor fisherman. When he has succeeded in saving a sufficient fund—and, since the river supplies the animal food, and the garden and hedges the vegetable food of the family, this is not impossible—he enters into a league with two or three neighbours as opulent as himself, and they embark their whole fortune in the purchase of a boat and tackle, which cost four hundred francs, or sixteen pounds. The partners, or *personniers*, as they call themselves, are now in a large way of business. They almost live in their boat; and, day and night, in calm and storm, they brave the vicissitudes of the seasons in pursuing their hazardous trade. It is calculated that a produce yielding four francs a-day will enable the associates to exist; but, alas! even this sum is not always the result of their labours. They rarely, indeed, make less than ten sous, but as rarely more than five francs; and thus they go on, from day to day, from month to month, of their painful existence, happy if the earnings of one period enable them almost to pay the debts of the former.

We have remarked in another publication, that the fishermen of France are by far the poorest of the peasantry, and we fear it is so also in England. There is, besides, a certain peculiarity of taste in the fishing districts, which make the people poorer than they need be. On the banks of the Seine, for instance, the fishermen are compelled to eat the John Dorys themselves, or else to throw them away; for this fish, so excellent and so wholesome, is not admitted to the tables of the *genteel*, and therefore fetches only a few centimes in the

market.\* In England we understand good eating better, at least in this respect, and very properly place the vulgar John Dory upon a par with the aristocratical turbot. We should not forget to add, that in some parts of Ireland—for instance, in the county Sligo, with which we are best acquainted—the skate is reckoned unfit for human food. The starving peasant turns away from it with contempt, and, when taken accidentally either by the rich or poor, it is thrown back into the sea. The same insane prejudice prevails to a certain extent in Scotland; while in London we meet with portions of the elsewhere proscribed, and really excellent fish, at the daintiest tables.

The right of fishing in the Seine was formerly vested in the proprietors of lands on the banks. The monks of Jumièges, for instance, enjoyed the property of the river from Melleraye to Duclair till the revolution. This they farmed out to their vassals, who were bound to reserve for their feudal lords the sturgeons, the finest salmons, and other tid-bits of the fishery. They were obliged every year, as M. Deshayes records in his “*Terre Gémétique*,” to present themselves at the abbey, with the insignia of their trade, and, with a white wand in their hand, to walk three times round a dovecote in the court. At the third time they knocked at the door, and made a reverence. Those who failed in this ceremony were guilty of a breach of the feudal discipline, and condemned to pay a fine.

On leaving Vieux Port we followed the course of

\* A centime is about the fifth part of a halfpenny.

the stream till we had gained the extremity of a tongue of land, which forms one of the sinuosities of this truly serpentine river. A single glance suffices to convince the spectator that this must have been a point of high importance at the time when the Seine was open to navigation; and he is only surprised not to see on the long narrow rock which terminates the land, at least the ruins of a fortress. Below the point the river looks like an arm of the sea; and there is nothing to intercept the view, carried over the vast waters of the channel, but the imperfection of the human vision. Above it narrows suddenly (soon to become still more narrow), and commences the strange involutions which make the land look like a series of peninsulas.

On this long narrow rock, however, there are only a few streets of small and ill-built, but gaily painted, houses, which contain a population of about fifteen hundred souls, furnishing the greater number of the pilots of the Seine. The rest of the male inhabitants of Quillebœuf are fishermen; while the women sit all day long knitting lace at their doors or windows, or grouped on little stools at some favourite corner of the street.

Quillebœuf is the capital of the Roumois, one of the old subdivisions of Upper Normandy, extending to Elbeuf inclusive. Till the time of Henri Quatre it consisted only of a few fishermen's huts; but this prince observing, and perhaps even exaggerating, the importance of the position—regarding it as the key of Normandy—fortified the port, constructed additional buildings, and endowed it with such privileges as he thought

were likely to attract a population. The fortress, under the command of Roger de Bellegarde, the friend of Henri till he became his rival with the beautiful Gabrielle, soon rose into note; and when the troops of the Duke de Mayenne presented themselves before the ci-devant fishing-hamlet, they were beaten in gallant style, and put to flight.

The "king of the people" even sought to connect his name with the glory of a place destined, as he imagined, to be one of the safeguards of the country, and he baptised it *Henriqueville*. The inhabitants, however, paid no more respect to the wishes of a prince who desired "that the poorest peasant in his kingdom might have a fowl in his pot on Sundays," than the Havrais had done to the commands of their knight-errant Francis, the "king of the gentlemen." It is easy to confer a name upon a place which has none; the most absurd or insignificant circumstances suffice every day for the idea. But to *change* a name is another thing. The name of a town, a village, or hamlet, is an heir-loom inherited from our ancestors. It is associated with the history of our family, with the graves of our kindred, with all our early recollections. The royal power did not extend over such matters even in the time of Francis I., one of the most absolute of the French kings. Havre remained Havre, and Quillebœuf will be Quillebœuf to the end of time.

Henri Quatre was fortunately a good man (although no doubt a little too fond of play and of the ladies), for he reigned, like Francis, as an absolute monarch. The difference between them is described in their two appel-



lations of “ king of the people” and “ king of the gentlemen.” Francis was not aware that such a political body as the people existed, or, if aware of the fact, he considered their power a usurpation, and, without ceremony, substituted for the States an assembly of *notables* (which may be translated “ courtiers”), not to criticise, but to approve of his intentions. Henri, on the other hand, recognised the people even by his hypocrisy ; for the *lits de justice*, which he established in lieu of the *notables*, were nothing else than a sacrifice to popular opinion. He loved individual glory as well as Francis ; but he was aware that this could only be acquired through the suffrages of the people. He therefore felt it to be his *interest* to make his subjects happy, and he had not the smallest scruple in *forcing* them to be so. That he was wholly uninfluenced by any enlarged views of political liberty, is evidenced by the fact that the very peasants whose pots he wished to supply with a fowl were sent to the galleys for killing a rabbit.

The firmness of character, however, of this prince kept the machine steady during his life ; but he was no sooner laid in his bloody grave than every thing fell into confusion. His Italian marriage let loose upon the nation a crowd of foreigners, headed by his queen, Maria de Medici—the “ strange woman,” who brought forth to the good, gallant, and great Henri Quatre, a blockhead and assassin ! The principal favourite of the queen-mother, who was made regent during the minority of Louis XIII., was Concini, a Florentine adventurer, to whom she had married her nurse’s daughter, Leonora Galigai. This man rose suddenly to the



highest dignity of a subject. He became "prime minister," as Voltaire says, "without knowing the laws of the kingdom; and marshal of France without having ever drawn a sword."

The Marshal d'Ancre, for such was now his title, almost plunged the kingdom into a civil war. The states-general were convoked for the last time before the revolution; but instead of attending to the crisis of the country, they amused themselves with discussing the affairs of the clergy. A complaint, however, was made of Concini's maladministration; the consequence of which was the arrest of the Prince de Condé, the chief of the discontented and of the Calvinists. All was in confusion; the Florentine's hour was at hand; and, reading the signs of the times, he determined, with his usual pride and boldness, to fortify himself in Normandy, of which he had been appointed governor.

Now comes our little town of Quillebœuf into the scene. Two years after the death of Henri, the fortifications had been rased by the order of Maria de Medici; but Concini, in his dilemma, bethinking himself that the "key of Normandy" would by and by be of some use, were it only to lock himself in, began with all speed to build them anew. He had not read the stars aright, however, even with the assistance of his wife, Leonora, who was reputed to be a sorceress. Louis, perplexed with the remonstrances of his subjects, and the rumours of wars that were in his ears, hardly knew what to do with his *ci-devant* friend Concini. A whisper from a young page called Luynes, determined him. The Florentine was murdered in the king's

palace, Leonora burnt alive for sorcery, and the queen-mother banished. There is no beast of the forest so energetic and uncontrollable in action as a fool.

The date of Concini's re-creations at Quillebœuf was 1616 ; the parliament interfered ; and in 1622, there was not one stone on the top of another.

The next historical anecdote connected with Quillebœuf we translate as we find it, our own recollections being somewhat confused on the subject.

“ A Norman gentleman called Latruaumond, born at Rouen, of the family of an auditor of accounts, was for a long time lost in debt and debauchery. Being considered, therefore, a fit associate for any desperate undertaking, some malcontents of the court inspired him with the idea of entering into a conspiracy against Louis XIV. Among the conspirators was the Duke de Rohan, son of the Duke de Mombazon, and also a certain Chevalier de Préau, a Marquis de Belleau, and a schoolmaster called Vanderende. Their object was to deliver up the town of Quillebœuf to the Dutch, for the purpose of facilitating their introduction into all Normandy. The plot, however, was discovered. Latruaumond fled to his château of Cracouville, near Evreux ; and when his pursuers arrived, took refuge in the cellars, and perished there, the victim of a useless resistance. The other conspirators were beheaded at the Bastille, with the exception of Vanderende, who was hung. It is said that the executioner, proud of having cut off the heads of a prince, a marquis, and a knight, turned to his assistants, and, pointing to the schoolmaster, said, ‘ You fellows, hang *him* yourselves.’ ”

A few years ago, the vessels passing up or down the river went close in by the quay of Quillebœuf; but there is now a sand-bank stretching far across the river, after having filled up a channel near the point of twenty feet of water. These banks are not only dangerous to navigation, but in some places they infect the air, producing fever and dropsy among the inhabitants on the shore. This is the case, for instance, at Tancarville, of which a fine view is enjoyed from Quillebœuf. The denizens of the hamlet below the château are livid and sickly.

Quillebœuf, although thus defended from enemies by sand-banks, instead of fortifications, is still a place of some importance, inasmuch as almost all vessels are under the necessity of coming to anchor near its harbour. When ascending the river, indeed, it is possible to get as far as Villequier in a single tide, if the wind is favourable; but when coming down, as they cannot pass Aizier and Vieux Port except at full water, they do not reach Quillebœuf till the state of the tide constrains them to stop.

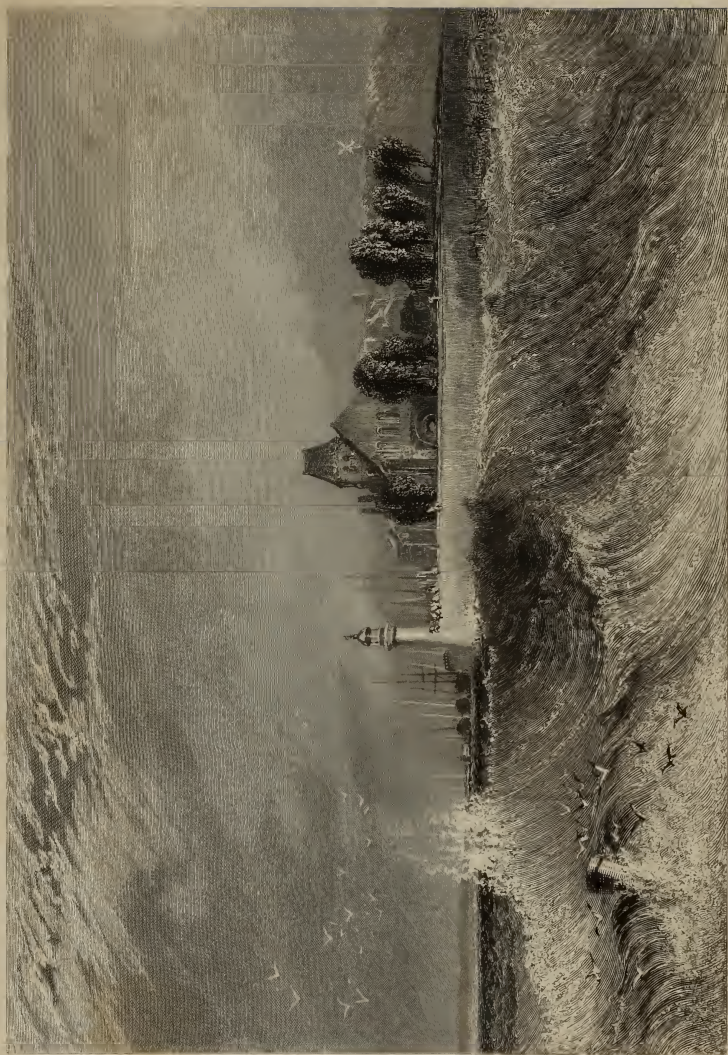
This little town, built on a rock, as we have said, at the extremity of a point of land—with no neighbours but the hamlet of Vieux Port at some distance on one hand, and that of Laroque on the other, with the river, interrupted by sand-banks, in front—and shut in behind from the rest of the world by an immense marsh, which we are about to visit,—presents, as might be expected, not a few peculiarities of manners and customs.

The Quillebois is a rough and unpolite animal, and his language is without refinement, and not so completely French as a stranger would desire. The Quille-

boise, however, is, in general, tall, handsome, and not destitute of a certain wild grace. Her cap is neither the lofty cone of the Lieuvin, nor the lace helmet of the Pays de Caux, but rather a plain set-out, round which is thrown loosely a piece of white muslin bordered with lace. Her dress is made to fit the shape from the chin to the waist ; but, on gala occasions, this is ornamented by a thickly wreathed frill down the front, across the neck, and over the shoulders, like an epaulette.

The young men do not look abroad for a wife ; marriages are contracted entirely among themselves ; and thus the whole village resembles a single family. When a death takes place, the misfortune affects, to a greater or less degree, every one of the community ; for all have lost either a kinsman or a connexion. In the same way, every marriage, every baptism, every fête, is a public transaction ; the affairs of each inhabitant are as well known to his neighbour as to himself ; his losses occasion universal sympathy, and his successes universal joy. This, however, must be taken *cum grano salis*, or Quillebœuf would be a terrestrial paradise. There are, no doubt, here, as elsewhere, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness ; though not perhaps to the same extent. Habit effects wonders. A family composed of individuals the most dissimilar in character generally contrive to get through the world without many squabbles. One's brothers and sisters are a part of one's self ; and although we may long sometimes to thrash them all heartily, yet, somehow or other, the *esprit de corps* (which is at bottom nothing else than selfishness) sets every thing right again.









Before quitting Quillebœuf, we present our readers, on the opposite page, with a glimpse of the town, and of the formidable bar so frequently mentioned in these wanderings. On the further side are a number of vessels, which are fortunate in finding themselves safely at anchor. They have been known to amount in number to a hundred.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE MARAIS VERNIER.

ON leaving Quillebœuf, the next place we reached was the village of the Marais Vernier, the capital, so to speak, of a tract of country altogether singular. In fact, while traversing these banks of the Seine, we sometimes feel as if we were on a terra incognita. Our previous reading, we had thought, was somewhat at large, and we anticipated little from the journey but the pleasure of seeing and recollecting. We have now discovered that we knew nothing.

The Marais Vernier is an immense marsh, in shape of a horse-shoe, the base of which is formed by the Seine, and the rounded part by a line of hills, on which are situated—stationed, we might say—about half a dozen villages, at almost regular distances.\* In the middle of this vast meadow, which is sometimes comparatively dry, there is a lake called the Grand'mare, the deep black waters of which never subside. It covers about a twentieth part of the whole area, and, at almost all seasons of the year, is darkened by clouds of water-fowl.

Gardens, or fields, of kitchen vegetables, which the inhabitants call *courtills*, occupy a space of nearly a

\* The whole surface of the marsh contains two thousand four hundred and seventy hectares.

twelfth part of the whole marsh, and their fertility may be characterised truly by the adjective prodigious. Turnips as thick as a man's leg, and more than two feet long, with carrots in proportion, are among the monstrous births of the soil;\* while the cabbages which do not weigh from twenty-five to thirty pounds are reckoned under the standard. M. de Nagu, the lord of the village of Marais Vernier, once gained a bet which he had made to send six cabbages to Paris weighing three hundred pounds. One of this illustrious half-dozen alone weighed sixty-eight! The strange thing is, that these enormous vegetables preserve no analogy with the animal kingdom under such circumstances, but keep their proper flavour amidst all their excess of growth. The potato, however, is an exception to this rule. It grows, like the rest, to a colossal size; but, in a soil so different from that of its natural hard and stony bed, it contracts a taste of *soap*.

The agricultural implements used in the marsh are very unlike, as we may suppose, those of other districts. The spade, for instance, which is employed in turning over earth that presents no resistance, is almost as large in proportion as the fruits of the soil. The beds are generally intersected at every fifteen feet of width by ditches, or drains, of six feet.

But while the principle of vegetable life developes itself so vigorously, that of human life declines. The

\* It may be necessary to say, that the Norman turnips are oblong instead of round, as we have them in England; while the carrots would resemble our English turnip, if they did not terminate in a short and sudden cone.

miasma of the marsh is fatal ; and in autumn more especially, or in the intense heats of summer, the victims are numerous. The disease produced is a slow fever, which varies in malignity with the state of the atmosphere, but for which there is no hope in medicine. Doctors, notwithstanding, are called as usual ; drugs are swallowed ; and the patient descends into the tomb *secundum artem*. The fresh tints of the women of Quillebœuf are here unknown. Sallow complexions, spiritless eyes, and feeble limbs, demonstrate the deadly influence of the marsh. Almost every girl you meet is an orphan—every woman a widow. The human affections themselves are under the control of the spirit of the place. Mourning for the dead is here a brief and empty form. The widow and the widower enter into a new connexion without loss of time, and

“ the funeral baked meats  
Do coldly furnish forth the wedding table.”

It is by no means uncommon for one individual, of either sex, to have been married four or five times ; and the conflicting interests of so many families produce, as a matter of course, eternal quarrels, heartburnings, and suits at law. The lawyers, fortunately, are at hand. These benevolent and disinterested persons, undeterred by the miasma of the marsh, crowd round its brink like the birds of prey that feed upon its bosom. They place themselves among the population, like the six-foot drains among the vegetable beds, to carry off the exuberance of fertility.

The village of Marais Vernier does not resemble so



much a village, as a confused multitude of detached cottages, each at some distance from the rest, and surrounded by gardens and orchards. The spirit of union, therefore, so visible at Quillebœuf, is here absent; the generous selfishness which embraces a whole town, because it is one's *own* town, is unknown; and the inhabitants of the marsh, quite as insulated in their position as the Quillebois, have nothing of that social sympathy which endears solitude to the solitary, and desolation to the desolate.

The marsh is said to have formerly been the site of a forest; but the same thing is said of every marsh in France, and for precisely the same reason—that trunks of trees, and entire trees, have been found beneath the surface of the earth. The most extraordinary place we know of, where this has been observed, is the vast *grève* of St. Michel, where the sands of the ocean descend to such a depth, that a ship sinks in them, and disappears, till even her tall masts leave no trace behind. The truth, we suspect, is, that the greater part of the lowlands, not only of France, but of all Europe, were at one time covered with woods, and that, wherever there are traces of any considerable revolution on the earth's surface, their remains will be found. The trees dug up from such abysses as the Marais Vernier, where the fluidity prevents any geological cue from being attained through the measurement of the accumulation of vegetable earth, are probably much older than has been supposed.

The project of reclaiming the lands of this great marsh has been frequently entertained; but the diffi-

culties are numerous. In the first place, the bank of the river has been sensibly elevated by the ceaseless deposits of the tide; so that the most distant part of the marsh has become the deepest. The water, therefore, never finds its way into the Seine, except when it is above its usual level. An artificial canal, indeed, exists; but this is found to be of little use, partly, no doubt, from the nature of the ground, but chiefly, we presume, from its not being carried sufficiently deep. In this more distant part is the lake of the Grand'mare, which operates strongly against the efforts of man. It is, in fact, the grand receptacle of the waters of the marsh, which at one moment it borrows, and at another repays with interest.

Henri Quatre was very anxious to reclaim the whole of the marshy lands of France, but met with many obstacles. It appears he was unable to find among his own subjects any person able or willing to assist his views, and at length he sent to the Netherlands.

“Not having found any of our own subjects,” says he, in an edict of 1607, “willing to attempt the enterprise, either on account of the great difficulty, risk, and expense, or from some other cause, we have brought from the Netherlands the Sieur Humphrey Bradley, a gentleman of the country of Brabant, and native of Bergen-op-Zoom, our master of dikes, and a personage of great knowledge and experience in draining.” Three other men joined with Bradley in the undertaking, and the association immediately commenced work in different parts of the kingdom. At the Marais Vernier they appear to have begun with considerable spirit; and

excavations are seen to this day, eight feet in diameter, known by the name of *abîmes*, and the remains of a construction called the *Digue* and *Maison des Hollandais*. These are the only traces of their labours, which were broken off, as is stated in the edicts, by law-suits and other opposition.

In vain Henri urged them to persevere, and in vain granted them exemption from imposts, and other privileges. In vain he even offered titles of nobility to any twelve among them who were not noble by birth. The Netherlanders could not brook the ungenerous treatment they had received from the lords of the district, and, with the exception of their chief, returned to their own country. Bradley would still have endeavoured to come to some understanding with the “seigneur châtelain et patron” of the marsh, and entered into some negotiations with him for the purpose. The result we only know by the fact, that the attempt at draining was never resumed; and in 1639 the magnanimous master of dikes was no more.

It was afterwards attempted to turn the marsh to some account by extracting from it the fuel called *tourbe*; but the expense of carriage was found to be too great to admit of any hope of success. Similar operations, notwithstanding, were recommenced in 1825 on a larger scale. Three hundred Picards set to work near the lake of Grand'mare; numerous trunks of trees, both of oak and elm, were dug up, and, for aught we know to the contrary, their labours are continued to this day.

The villages which surround the Marais are poor

and ill-constructed; but their situation, and the view they afford, are very striking. Placed on the sides of the semicircular chain of hills, they overlook the vast plain, intersected by canals of water as black as night, with its dead lake in the middle. The ceaseless lowing of cattle feeding on the outskirts, and on some meadows that extend into the interior, as it swells wildly and mournfully on the heavy air, sounds like the voice of Pestilence; and the shrill scream of the sea-birds that hover in thousands over the lake conveys a kind of superstitious thrill to the heart of the stranger.

The Château du Marais attracts notice only by its common-place character, on a spot where we look for something more than usually striking; but at no great distance to the south, and still nearer the lake, there were seen, till lately, some vestiges of a more ancient and remarkable edifice. This was called the Château du Grand'mare; and on the opposite side of the marsh, near the modern village of Sainte Opportune, it was confronted by another of a similar character, every stone of which has now disappeared. The latter was called the Vieux Château; but both names, we apprehend, were bestowed by the peasantry after the buildings had fallen into ruin. These two ruins are connected together in popular tradition; and, being unwilling to pass by so remarkable a place without lounging for a while, we give the story as plainly as the habits of a somewhat unmanageable pen will permit.

At a certain period, which the village chroniclers carry back to the time of Charlemagne, although the

story evidently belongs to a much later era, the Marais Vernier belonged, in its whole extent, to two powerful families. The residence of one was the Château de Grand'mare, and that of the other the Vieux Château. The great plain was divided in equal portions between them, as also the fishing of the lake; no retainer of the Vavassours being permitted to cast his nets on the farther side of an ideal line drawn through the middle, and the same kind of reservation being imposed upon the retainers of Montargis. These regulations were at first productive of many disputes, some of them not unattended by bloodshed; but by degrees the balance of power found its proper level, and for a considerable time before the date of the tradition we here undertake to repeat, the two families had lived in the same kind of amity which is preserved by neighbouring princes whose similarity of interests keeps them at peace.

In those days, indeed, every petty baron resembled a sovereign prince, and the affairs of his estate were managed with all the formality which attends the government of a kingdom. His sons and daughters were bestowed in marriage either as peace-offerings or as gifts of friendship and alliance; and the youth or maiden who presumed to fancy that the taste or liking of either should be consulted on the occasion, was treated as a rebel to lawful and natural authority. This state of things, it may be said, remains to our day; and perhaps it does—but with far less shew of reason. The most violent admirer of romance existing would hardly desire that a princess of the blood should be allowed a liberty of choice; and the damsels of the olden time we



speak of were in precisely the same situation as princesses of the blood. The interest, nay, sometimes the very existence, of the family depended upon the disposal of the daughter's hand; and she who allowed her own predilections to interfere might, therefore, without much injustice, have been termed undutiful.

At any rate, the point was completely understood between the two families more immediately in view. Several matrimonial alliances had taken place between them, without any symptoms of unwillingness on the part of the betrothed; and now the fair Julie de Montargis, betrothed almost from infancy to Roland de Vavassour, found herself within about a year of her wedding, without any other symptom of emotion than a radiant smile when the idea passed across her mind. Julie, it is told in tradition, was "the most beautiful of the beautiful," and she possessed more especially, in all their lustre, the blue eyes of the Normans. This is a kind of eye with which a woman can speak—all the languages of Babel. The darker orb has more intensity, but you require to understand it previously; the blue discourses extempore, and you know what it would say without a key.

Roland de Vavassour had just donned the hauberk of a knight, which, in spite of tradition, places his era nearer us than the tenth century, and fixes his age—supposing him, as is most probable, to have flourished before the decline of chivalry—at twenty-one. He was a fine, manly, handsome youth, and of those ample proportions which befitted the hereditary wearer of several stone of iron. Julie at least believed him to be

cast in the true mould of a hero. She dreamt of him at night, and—still more unequivocal symptom—she dreamt of him by day. Roland himself was of a grave and somewhat melancholy character. The saying of Pierre, that “a soldier’s mistress is his religion,” was no jest to him. The love of God and of woman seemed to him to be twin sentiments; and in taking upon himself the vows of knighthood, he understood literally that he pledged himself, soul and body, to be true at once to his lady and to the Cross.

The same flight of time, however, which brought nearer the day appointed for the union of the lovers, brought with it, in the first place, the day of their temporary separation. It was the custom in the family of the Vavassours—(which leads us into the eleventh, if not into the twelfth century)—for their sons to signalise their entrance into knighthood, and their sense of the honour to which they had thus attained, by setting out on a course of adventures, which was to extend for a year and a day from their exodus from the paternal château. Whether Roland really grieved or not at the circumstance, has escaped the memory of “the oldest inhabitant;” but we have it at least on oral record, that on the day of the assumption he wept at his mistress’s feet the first tears that had stained his cheek of manhood; and set forth, in the character of knight-errant, in quest of honour and hard blows.

Some months passed by, and Julie was inconsolable. All the habits of her life had been interrupted—her very thoughts required to seek a new channel. She wandered along the borders of the marsh, gazing on the still lake,

where she had floated, with Roland by her side, on many a summer's afternoon. She endeavoured to fill up her "waste of feelings unemployed," with new occupations and new favourites; but it would not do. In vain she bestowed the name of Roland upon her best-loved puppy; in vain she sung the songs he had praised, and listened to the echo, endeavouring to fancy it to be his voice. Her solitude of soul seemed to increase; she became more melancholy every moment; and at length she had reached that point of romantic sensibility, at which so many young women of our own intellectual day either throw themselves into the Thames, or quaff such a medicine, that sickness of the stomach is mingled, as we read, with sickness of the heart.

Just at this moment there came a new hero into the field. It was the younger brother of Roland—younger only by an hour—who had been educated at some ducal court with the name of which we are unacquainted, and who returned to the comparatively humble abode of his father an accomplished courtier. Claude de Vavassour was received by Julie at once as a friend; she looked upon him as a portion of his brother; and her heart felt a happy relief in being able to pour forth its feelings into a breast where they would be sure to be received with welcome. As for Claude, he at first beheld the fair rustic with a kind of amused surprise. Her manner was so different from any thing he had been accustomed to, that he looked upon her as a being of another, and possibly lower, species. He sought her society as an amusement, and listened to her rhapsodies just as he listened to the music of the minstrels.

By degrees, however, her society became necessary to him. The echo of her voice lingered in his ear after the sound had departed—the ducal court retreated farther and farther from his vision; and, by and by, the hills which bounded the Marais Vernier became the horizon of his world, and the blue eye of Julie the sun which enlightened it.

This change was for a time imperceptible to Julie; and at last when she saw it with her eyes, she endeavoured to conceal it from her mind. Claude was her friend, her companion, her confidant—he was the only being to whom she could speak freely; and the day when he was absent from the Vieux Château was a blank to Julie. The tradition goes further, and says that she loved him—but this is nonsense. A woman of a pure mind cannot love two men at the same moment, and her love for Roland was too manifest for dispute. We must even confess that the peasant-chroniclers of the Marais affix a certain stigma of lightness to the character of our Julie; and that the portion of the story which relates to her is told as a general satire upon woman and woman's love.

This we can excuse in *them*, on the score of ignorance; but there are other historians, and other storytellers, to whom we cannot allow the plea. The man in civilised life who disbelieves in love is capable of atheism! What though we ourselves may never have met with it? Do we not feel that it exists? Are not the evidences of its being engraven on our souls and consciences in the same characters as those which testify the existence of a Deity? It is folly, nay impiety, to

say, because we have been abused and deceived ourselves,—“there is no love!” Our own hearts give us the lie at the very moment, for love is there. It is the same way with misanthropes, or the disbelievers in human virtue—they are either fools or scoundrels. They either doubt the existence of a quality which they know they do not possess themselves; or, possessing it themselves, they are so boyish as to fancy that it is a peculiar attribute of their own, unshared by the rest of the human race!

As for Julie, she was the friend of Claude, and the mistress of Roland—but this distinction, which is possible for a woman, is not possible for a man. If we are asked, why? we answer frankly, we do not know. It may be that the heart of man is naturally more capacious—but that question we shall not enter upon at present. All we say is, that a woman may be the friend of one of our sex, and the mistress of another; and that a man, if he is not the lover of the object of his attentions can only be a common acquaintance.

Julie, then, conceived a tender and sisterly regard for Claude, and Claude a deep and fervent passion for Julie.

Time went by — “moons rolled on moons away”—the year at length expired, and the day came; and Julie found herself, with beating heart, and flushing cheek, and happy yet anxious eyes, standing by the altar of the little chapel of Saint Ouen. It was here that the lovers were to meet; it was here that Roland was to deposit the palm-branch he had cut in the woods of Judea; and it was here that, in a few days after, their union was to be celebrated.



The chapel of Saint Ouen, which stood on the site of the present church of that name, was about half a league from the château; and as Julie had walked towards it alone in the dusk of the evening, a certain degree of perplexity had mingled with the flutter of her thoughts. The deep despondency into which Claude had gradually sunk, as the time approached when his dream was to have an end, had given her not only affliction, but remorse; for she could not but be aware that her own conduct towards him had served to foster the passion which she was now about to crush—and with it the heart where it had grown. She remembered with bitterness the selfish facility with which she had yielded herself to a society she found so agreeable, and cursed those minstrel-songs whose witchery had so often induced her to listen, when, in mercy to the singer, she ought to have shut her ears.

On these latter occasions her expressive eyes had unconsciously responded to the strain; and Claude, in an ecstasy of delight, forgot the destiny which severed them. His brother—his brave and noble brother—faded before his love-enchanted view into a shadow; and, even after the intoxication of the moment was over, the idea took possession of his soul, that Julie might yet be his. This consummation could only be brought about by one of two means—the falsehood or death of Roland. The former, Claude (who was a courtier) fancied at times was at least within the pale of possibility; but when he turned his eyes upon the face of his mistress, and heard the accents of a voice which melted in the ear of the listener till his whole

soul was saturated with sweetness, he acknowledged with a groan, that the man who loved Julie once must love for ever. The other alternative, his rival's death—Claude fled from the imagination as if it had been a spectre. High in honour, noble in mind, he was one of those specimens of knightly loyalty which Tradition and her sister Romance delight to paint; and when the idea crossed his mind, of happiness purchased at the expense of Roland's blood, his cheek blanched, and his heart trembled. Claude, however, though a knight, was still a man. The paleness of his cheek, and the quaking of his heart, were caused not so much by the fact which he contemplated, as by the shame and horror which he felt on discovering that he could contemplate the catastrophe without a brother's grief. Yet he continued, notwithstanding his fits of remorse, to listen to the tales of casualty brought back by pilgrims from the Holy Land; and sometimes, on such occasions, Julie had started in sudden terror, as, on raising her tearful lids, she saw the eager, and almost wolfish, expression of his eyes.

As the day approached, however, Claude lost hope. Intelligence had been received of his brother, who was then at Nicea, on his journey homeward. He had passed unscathed through the dangers of the Moslem country; he had knelt at the holy sepulchre, with his hand upon the hilt of his sword, and the pennon of his lance pointed against the infidels gathering round like evil spirits; he had cut his palm-branch in triumph from the fairest bough in Palestine; he had won fame and honour in field and tournament; and having acquitted

himself in all respects — of faith, courage, and loyalty — as a Christian knight, he was now returning in triumph to receive the reward of his chivalry in the fair hand of Julie.

On the last day of the year Claude bade adieu to the Vieux Château. Julie was aware that it would be so; and yet his departure gave her pain. She wept as she extended her hand to him; and wept the more when she found that the lips were cold and tremulous to which it was pressed. Claude, however, bore the farewell with knightly pride. He had never spoken of his love, and had sworn never to do so while his brother lived. He mounted his steed; then paused, as if he had forgotten something. Julie raised her head, and their eyes again met; his face was as pale as marble; and the rigid and compressed lips bespoke his internal struggle. She stepped forward, in mingled grief and remorse, and uttered his name; but the young knight only bent his head in answer, and, closing his vizor, rode away.

All these circumstances passed in review before the damsel of Montargis during her twilight walk to the chapel of Saint Ouen; but by the time she arose from her knees by the altar, every other thought was lost in the delightful idea, that in a few minutes more she would be in the arms of Roland.

An hour passed away, and she grew restless. She began to pace through the deserted aisle of the chapel, and start at the changing aspect of Saint Ouen, as his statue of white marble gleamed amidst the deepening shadows of evening. The silence was awful. The

echo of her light foot ran in whispers along the walls; and she stopped, shuddering. The colours of the western window were still faintly visible, and threw a red stain upon the font beneath, near the door; and here and there a streak of mellowed light, at regular intervals, marked the openings of the lateral windows. The middle of the chapel, however, was filled with shadows; on the opposite wall the spectral head of Saint Ouen shone with a ghastly paleness amidst the gloom; and at the eastern end, the statues of the altar-piece were scarcely visible against the darkened window behind.

Julie felt her heart grow sick. A strange confusion took possession of her faculties; the pavement seemed to open; dead faces stared at her wherever she turned her eyes; her name was pronounced in whispers; and as a chill blast of wind entered the chapel, and swept moaning round the walls, she sunk down at the foot of an image of the Virgin, near which she had been standing.

The impression upon her mind was, that the western door had opened, and that a funeral procession was in the act of entering! The whole nave seemed to be filled with moving shadows; and the whispering of voices, and the waving of garments, fell distinctly upon her ear. Had the door been really opened to the night wind? And were these things caused by the uncertain light admitted, and the waving of votive offerings and pictures, as the current of air rushed round the building? Julie half raised her head as the supposition suggested itself; but the next moment a new sensation

of faintness came over her, as she actually saw a human figure standing in the red light near the font.

The figure advanced; it was that of a man—of a knight, loaded with armour—yet no sound followed his footfalls! As he passed one of the windows, she saw that he bore the red pennon of Sir Roland de Vavassour in one hand, and a palm-branch in the other. Having glided at length as far as the middle of the nave, he stopped, and turned his face towards Julie, which gleamed in the surrounding darkness, as white as that of the marble statue of Saint Ouen. A low moan escaped her oppressed heart as she recognised the features of her lover; and the figure, seeming to fix his eyes upon her, advanced a step. But the next moment, waving his hand mournfully, he crossed his brow and bosom, and glided slowly away towards the altar. Julie fainted.



## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE DEAD LAKE.

THE tradition goes on to say, that the damsel of Montargis was delirious for some days after this adventure; and that, even when she had recovered, it was thought improper to run a risk of forcing her mind back into the fatal remembrance, by informing her that a palm-branch had actually been found on the altar! No trace of Sir Roland had been discovered; no knight had been seen in the neighbourhood; the fact was, therefore, certain beyond dispute, that what she had seen was an apparition. Julie, however, required no reasoning to convince her of this. It was the face of no living man she had seen; it was no armed warrior of earth who had glided through the chapel, without producing a sound by his tread. Roland, besides, would not have looked upon his love with those glassy eyes, had his arms been able to press her to his breast. It was, indeed, but the form of her gallant knight she had beheld—a shadow from his far and bloody grave; and a week had scarcely elapsed, when sure intelligence was received that he had perished in a storm at sea.

The palm-branch was preserved by the monks as a relic of extraordinary sanctity; and many thought that the warrior, whose spirit had thus performed the vow

he had taken in the body, should be admitted into the holy army of the saints. That they were correct is more than probable; for, even without the ceremony of canonisation, the relic wrought numerous cures which were justly esteemed miraculous. The gratitude of the common people, however, does not wait to be sanctioned by papal bulls; and many a village maid who had recovered her bloom, withered by the miasma of the marsh, prayed fervently to the supernatural physician; and many a young mother, as she held up her first-born to the palm-branch, invoked and blessed Saint Roland.

In the meantime, the old lord of Vavassour died, and Sir Claude returned to the Marais Vernier, to take possession of the family estates. For a time he grieved sincerely for the death of his brother; but gradually the world brightened before the eyes of the youthful knight. Julie was now his, beyond the intervention of fate; and his family, absorbed in their own selfish feelings, even attempted to push forward the new union with indecent haste. But Claude did not wish Julie to be merely his wife, but also his mistress; and, conscious that she loved him better than any living being, he resolved to await the revival of the crushed flower before he gathered it.

This took place in the due course of nature; but the flower had suffered a change. More beautiful than ever, its beauty was of a softer, grave nature; and its fragrance, before that of the rose and lily intermingled, was now the sweet perfume of the wall-flower growing upon monuments and ruins. This change, however,

after a time, was only perceptible to Claude—to him who had explored every depth of her mind, and studied every expression of her countenance. To others she seemed the Julie of former years, only altered from a girl into a woman; and her new gravity of character was looked upon as nothing more than the change which sometimes takes place so suddenly at the age when instinct ripens into reason.

Julie, when her first grief was over, knew that Claude must be her husband; and, far from regretting it, she looked forward with pleasure to the period when their friendship would be so endearingly cemented. Something, however, was due to the dead, and something to the feelings of the living; and she steadily refused to become a wife till she had dedicated a full year to mourning for her lover. Claude, nevertheless, was constantly with her; he was the companion of her walks; he knelt with her at the altar; and by degrees she loved him as well as woman can do, before the ruins of her first idol have completely vanished from the temple of her heart.

The time at length had almost arrived, and the waning year touched upon its close. Preparations were made for celebrating the marriage with all the pomp of the feudal age. This was the grand occasion when the ancient rivalry of the two families broke out, although in a new form; and the question was not of prowess in the field, but of splendour in the hall. Minstrels and jugglers thronged the courts of the two castles; lords and ladies from far and near crowded to the approaching festivities; and many a wandering knight turned

out of his road, when he heard the tidings, to claim hospitality either of the Vavassours or Montargis.

The day came at last, and it was ushered in with rain, and storm, and thunder. A sudden damp was cast upon the spirits of every body—and no wonder, for the bravery of the ladies would be spoiled, and the plumes of the gentlemen dangle ungracefully about their ears. The ceremony, however, must go on; preparations were already made at the chapel; the priests had been in waiting since daybreak; and processions of monks had arrived from the neighbouring convents, with relics and banners. It was the family custom, however, that the marriage should be celebrated at night, by the light of the holy tapers; and there was yet time for a change of weather. But the hopes of the party were disappointed. The evening closed in dark and gusty; and at length the torches were lighted, and the cortège set out, silent and gloomy, for the chapel of Saint Ouen.

The nature of the ground precluded the possibility of riding; but the ladies, highest in dignity, were carried in litters. Among them Julie went first, with her lover walking by her side. Sir Claude sometimes pressed the hand of his bride, but neither spoke; they looked round upon the strange scene with a feeling resembling wonder; and when they saw the torches extinguished one by one by the wind and rain, Julie felt a depression stealing over her heart, which she could not subdue.

“ Claude —” said she, at last, faintly.

“ My life!”

“ Could not this be deferred even now ? ”

“ It is impossible.”

“ Heaven itself seems against us ! ”

“ You will not think so when we return to the château, and find ourselves surrounded by lights and merry faces. Cheer up, my love ! this is only an accident of the weather. Heaven must be on the side of my Julie, in spite of all the thunder in the clouds ! ”

“ Claude ! ” said she again ; “ did you mark that single skiff on the lake, gliding through the red reflection of the torches ? ”

“ I did.”

“ Had it not a strange appearance ? ”

“ It was a remarkable object in a remarkable scene. Would that we had a painter here ! ”

“ I thought, when I saw it, of the rhyme you once sung to me of that mystic boat which carries the dead across the river of hell ! ”

“ Julie ! my own life ! you must not give way to such fancies. This is our wedding night. No mortal crime stains my hand—no evil thoughts my heart ; and you, my fairest bride, are as pure as the angels themselves. Why should we fear ? Come, give me your hand ; lean upon my shoulder, that you may feel I am near you.”

“ Do you come in steel gauntlets to a bridal ? ” exclaimed she, quickly, as she complied.

“ Alas, no ; but your own hand is so marble-cold that you cannot feel mine aright.”

While he was yet speaking, the procession arrived at the chapel-door ; and, without order or ceremony,



all hastened into the shelter of the little colonnade. In vain the priests endeavoured to preserve some regularity, and at least form the company into a line on entering the church ; but, cold, dripping, and gloomy, they resisted all control, and hurried up to the altar in a confused, and scarcely an amicable, mass. The mortified monks lost all presence of mind. The torches, on which they had depended so much for effect, were not rekindled ; and the tapers surrounding the high altar threw only a feeble and flickering light into the body of the church. Worship, however, began ; all fell upon their knees ; and a deep silence followed the tumult, interrupted only by the chanting of the priests.

When the congregation rose, the exhibition of the relics took place immediately previous to the marriage service ; and as each shrine was elevated, every knee touched the earth, every tongue muttered an *ora pro nobis*, and every hand made the sign of the cross upon the brow and bosom. The stranger brotherhoods exhibited first ; and then the priests of Saint Ouen came upon the scene. The last relic they held up to the adoration of the multitude was a *palm-branch*.

Julie started at the sight, which recalled so terrible a recollection ; but the next moment, detecting in the invocations of the peasantry, who filled the bottom of the nave, the name of Roland, she looked round in astonishment and dismay.

“ Look to the altar, love,” whispered Claude ; “ our bridal service begins !”

“ Hush !”

“ Julie! dearest Julie! —”

“ There! there!”—and, having uttered these words, a scream broke from her lips, so loud and shrill as to make every heart quake; and before her lover could extend his arms, she fell senseless upon the ground.

She was taken up by her bride-maidens; and Sir Claude, having ascertained by a glance that she was properly cared for, strode fiercely towards the point upon which her eyes had been fixed. This was the statue of Saint Ouen, leaning against which appeared the tall figure of a man, in the dress of a penitent, with his cowl drawn over his face.

“ What knave is this,” cried Sir Claude, in a paroxysm of passion, “ who disturbs the rites of holy church?”

“ He is no knave,” answered the peasants; “ he is the Monk of the Marais!”

“ Monk or no monk, he shall play his juggleries here no longer”—and the impetuous knight rushed forward, as if for the purpose of ejecting the supposed offender by main force. The peasants threw themselves in a body between.

“ Let us stand by the monk!” cried they, tumultuously, one to the other. “ Come, brethren, to the rescue! The Monk of the Marais! The Monk of the Marais!”—and the young knight, bareheaded and unarmed, as were also his comrades, seeing that opposition to such a force was useless, stood still, chafing with fury and disdain. The monk, in the meantime, had remained in precisely the same posture, as if ignorant that he was at all concerned in the tumult around him.

He leant with his right arm resting on the drapery of the statue, and his cheek reclining upon his hand. The attitude would have seemed one of mere indolence, had it not been that the left arm hung down powerlessly, and gave the idea of extreme despondence and desolation. Even Claude, when he had considered the figure for some moments, repented of his violence.

“ My friends,” said he, “ I perceive that this man means no harm ; but the health and the nerves of the lady Julie are out of order—his presence disturbs her—I pray you persuade him to depart in peace.”

The monk, as if understanding what he had said, immediately arose from his reclining posture, and, gathering his ample cloak around him, walked slowly away, the peasants falling back respectfully, and making a line for him to pass. When he had gained the door of the chapel, he stopped for an instant, and turned half round ; but the next moment he resumed his slow and stately step, and vanished in the darkness without.

The bride, however, was not to be reassured. She trembled violently, and ever and anon her eyes sought the statue of St. Ouen with so bewildered a gaze, that her friends feared for her intellects. Even the tender whispers of Claude were unavailing. She answered “ Yes ” and “ No ” incoherently to his questions ; and at last burst into a hysterical fit of sobbing. It was in vain to persist. The bride was evidently unwell : the couch of sickness must be spread for her, instead of the marriage bed ; and the counsel of the leech sought before that of the priest. The amazed company broke up, and returned as they had come, in gloom and

discontent—and so ended the bridals of the *Bâron* of Vavassour and the damsel of Montargis.

Here the tradition, instead of gratifying any reasonable curiosity it may have excited on the subject of the Monk of the Marais, merely states parenthetically that this individual was an ascetic recluse, who had taken up his abode in the middle of the marsh, on the very brink of the lake of Grand'mare. It neither fixes the date of his appearance in the district, nor states whence he came; but leaves the hearer to conjecture that he was some religious enthusiast, who thought to cheat heaven of its right of chastisement in the next world, by inflicting on himself all the pains and penalties of sin which the present can afford. His enthusiasm, however, was harmless to others, although dangerous, and perhaps fatal in intent to himself, as the situation of his dwelling sufficiently proved.

The waters of the lake were evidently gaining upon the comparatively firm land—and perhaps at that day they comprehended a much smaller surface than they do now. The banks were raised in some places to a height of many feet, and the poisonous wave below seemed to corrode and eat into their substance, till occasionally huge masses of black earth, breaking off from the body of the marsh, toppled headlong into the deep. When a catastrophe of this kind occurred, the liberated fragment was generally carried far out into the lake by the impetus of its fall; and, being composed of light and spongy earth, united by fibres of plants and branches of decayed trees, it formed a floating island, and swam for several days together. Gradually, how-

ever, a separation of its parts took place ; piece by piece it mouldered away, and at length wholly disappeared.

In a particular place, one of these masses had detached itself from a sort of promontory ten or twelve feet high, which formed the loftiest part of the bank, but, arrested at the water's edge, hung there in a posture so threatening, that the fishermen, as they passed, made unconsciously a wide sweep round the spot. There were several other portions of the bank in a decaying state, but this would have been pointed out as the most likely to go first ; yet this was the very spot on which it had pleased the hermit to build his solitary hut. Some thought that the site was chosen on account of the shelter which the promontory behind afforded ; but all remarked, as a very strange and even awful circumstance, that although every month some fragment fell, this, which had appeared the nearest to such a consummation of them all, still retained its position. It seemed as if the sanctity of the recluse protected the very earth on which his hut was built ! He was sometimes seen abroad, and even Julie and Claude had occasionally passed him in their walks ; but the hermit neither raised his cowl nor his head. It may easily be conceived, that a man of this kind needed only to die to become as good a saint as Roland himself ; but in the meantime, awaiting such a catastrophe, the peasants took care that, at all events, he should not perish for want of food. Their gifts were thrown at arm's length from the bank ; but the master of the hut, so far from coming forth to thank them, if he saw them approach at a distance, retired into his lair like a wild beast.



In the middle of the night of the interrupted nuptials, Julie, having fallen into a profound sleep, was left alone by her attendants, in the hope that when they returned, they should find her almost well both in body and mind. Her malady, they knew, required only rest and kindness ; for it was evidently nothing more than a weakness incidental to the female constitution. She had been placed in a new and momentous situation ; the storm and thunder with which the night was ushered in had affected powerfully her sensibilities ; the view of the palm-branch had called up before her mind's eye the awful vision she had seen on that very spot ; and the spectral form of Saint Ouen catching her view at the instant—or, perhaps, even the muffled figure of the poor monk—had completed the overturn of her equilibrium. The attendants, shading the night-taper from the invalid's eyes, carefully closed the door, and retired into an ante-room, to watch there for the rest of the night.

The sleep of Julie did not last long. She started up in the bed, and looked wildly round the room, as if in search of some person ; then, pressing her hand to her hot forehead, appeared to endeavour to call to mind what had passed. Soon after, she arose noiselessly, and creeping across the room, listened at the door. All was quiet. She then hastily caught up some articles of dress, which she put on with feverish impatience ; and adding, over all, apparently in the confusion of her mind, the splendid nuptial-robe of the preceding evening, contemplated her appearance for a moment in the mirror. A smile passed across her face as she observed

the fever-bloom on her cheek, and the fire of delirium in her eye; and then, throwing open the casement, she leaped with the lightness of a bird upon the ledge of the window, and crept down the broken stones of a buttress into the court.

“ Queen of heaven !” cried the warder at the postern-gate, as she presented herself; “ what means this, dear lady ?”

“ I have a vow !” said she calmly. “ If unfulfilled this night, I shall see no sun of to-morrow. I am your lord’s daughter; I am your foster-sister. Open, I command and entreat you !” The warder obeyed reluctantly; but after she was gone, he appeared to be seized with a panic, and re-opening the gate looked after her into the night.

“ No !” said he, with a sigh of relief, as he saw her take the path to the chapel of Saint Ouen : “ her errand is not to destroy her body, but to benefit her soul. God and the Virgin be her comfort ! Holy Saint Ouen pray for her ! Amen !” — and so saying, he retired again and closed the door; resolving, however, to prevent the possibility of accident, to let some of the family know of her nocturnal excursion, as soon as a change of guard took place.

Julie, in the meantime, when she had advanced far enough in the path to be concealed from observation by the trees, changed her route; and, circling round a thickly planted eminence, darted, with the fleetness of a deer, to the bank of the Grand’mare. A single small skiff was moored to a little quay constructed by the fishermen, the rest of the boats lying at a distant

village. She untied the line, as one accustomed to such employment, and leaping lightly into the vessel, seized an oar, and made her glide through the water like a swan.

The rain was now completely over, and only the remains of the storm moaned in hollow-sounding gusts along the lake; while the moon, appearing fitfully through the broken rack, one moment wrapped the waters in light, and the next left them in the blackest gloom. Sometimes the vast level of the marsh, undistinguished in the obscurity, seemed only a portion of the Grand'mare; and an idea of loneliness, united with that of immensity, was produced, resembling the impression which thrills our souls when voyaging, far from all view of the land, on the bosom of the mighty ocean. Julie felt the fever of her blood abate as she gazed around, and the night-wind appeared to cool her throbbing temples and burning bosom. A sensation of awe stole over her mind, and her feelings, if not less deep, became more tranquil.

The skiff now approached the promontory of black earth, beneath which she could distinguish, though imperfectly, the hanging fragment, and the hut of the hermit-monk. She laid down the oar gently, and allowed the little vessel to glide undirected through the deepening shadow. Protected from the influence of the gust, the lake here was smooth and silent; and no sound announced the visitor's approach, save the gentle rippling of the water at the prow of the boat. She landed, and knocked with a trembling hand at the door of the hut.

There was no answer.

“Father!” said she, at length, in a broken and timid voice. There was a sudden stir within, like that of one who starts in terror from his repose.

“Father!” she repeated, almost in a whisper. She trembled from head to foot, and leant helplessly against the wall.

“Who is there?” demanded the monk, in a low and husky tone.

“A penitent! a wanderer! an outcast of Heaven! Counsel me—help me—uphold the steps of my despair—or I am lost!”

The door opened, and the monk slowly came forth. His head was uncovered; and, as the moonlight fell upon his pale and haggard features, Julie tottered back.

“What would you, lady?” said he—“Lo! I am here.” She wrung her hands in speechless anguish.

“Why gaze in such astonishment? Do you marvel that disappointment should have withered my heart—that suffering should have drunk up my yet young blood—that despair should have dimmed my eye?”

“And this for me!”

“Ay, for you! It was weakness—no matter. I loved you—even to sin—even to idolatry! You were my only—my all—”

“For me!—For me!”—and she threw herself on her knees before him, and clasped his hand, and covered it with tears and kisses. He in vain endeavoured to raise her. One moment she gazed in his wan face, and the next examined his pale thin hand: “It was

all for me!" she cried—"O Roland! Roland!" and broke anew into a fit of passionate weeping.

"Julie," said De Vavassour, in strong agitation—"Lady!—I was not prepared for this. All things else I could have met with fortitude—Spare me—spare me, I entreat!"

"Spare you?" exclaimed she, suddenly rising—"And is it to Julie that Roland says 'spare me?' I would have nursed you in my arms, even as a young mother nurses her first-born; I would have begged for you through the world; I would have stood by your side in battle, and received you in my lap when you fell; your last sigh would have escaped upon my lips; and, having hidden your beloved head under the earth, I would have laid me down and died upon your grave!"

Roland clasped her in his arms; he hid his face on her neck; for some time his chest heaved convulsively and in silence; but at length the soldier's pride gave way—he sobbed aloud, and Julie felt that her shoulder was wet with burning tears.

They sat down upon the ground, and a hasty and abrupt conversation made each acquainted with what had passed.

"I escaped as if by miracle," said Roland, "from the devouring waters, when all else were swallowed up, and made my way alone to the valley of the Marais, a week before the expiration of the year and day. My vow being unfulfilled, I could not present myself to my kindred before the time; but wandered at nightfall around the Vieux Château like a spirit. At every peasant's hut, as I listened for tidings by the door,



I heard surmises of your infidelity ; and with my own eyes I saw enough to carry conviction into the breast of a long-absent lover. The night of our promised meeting, however, would determine my fate ; and when the evening fell, I commenced my watch near the château. No lights, however ! no preparations !—all was dark—all was silence and solitude around.”

“ Dreadful mistake !” exclaimed Julie—“ I was by that time in the chapel, being unwilling that our first meeting should take place, in the usual custom, before a crowd.”

Sir Roland shuddered.

“ When I reached the chapel of Saint Ouen, I believed it to be utterly deserted ; but lest, perchance, some lonely penitent might be within, I pulled off my boots before entering—for already the cloud had come upon my spirit, and I had determined to retire for ever from the world, and break off all communication with my own species. Something stirred, methought, near the image of Our Lady—”

“ Alas ! alas ! It was I !”

“ You ! Mysterious Heaven ! I passed on, supposing it to be the creature of fancy ; I deposited my palm-branch on the altar ; left the chapel as silently as I had entered—and, lo ! I am here !”

Julie’s tale was told as simply.

“ Do you love Claude ?” said De Vavassour, after a pause, when she had finished.

“ I do—as my friend, and your brother.”

“ Could you have loved him as a husband—as a lover, had you remained in ignorance of my fate ?”

She paused for a moment before replying, and then said with simplicity —

“ It may be that I could. They say the heart loves twice ; but I cannot tell. Claude is worthy of a woman’s love — he is brave, generous, and lofty in mind.”

“ And is he beautiful ?” said Roland, with emotion ; “ is he tall and graceful ? Is he high-spirited and light-hearted as he was when a boy ?—Companion of my cradle ! O, my brother ! my twin brother !” He covered his face with his hands for some moments.

“ Julie,” said he at length, “ it is time to separate. Go back as you came, and endeavour, if possible, to gain your chamber unobserved. You shall hear from me in the morning.”

She rose hastily, and springing to the water’s edge, spurned the light skiff into the lake with her foot. It darted out beyond the shadow of the promontory, and, being caught in the gust, drifted towards the opposite bank.

“ This is my place,” said she, returning ; “ here I remain till my family come to seek me—I shall be found under the protection of my husband.”

“ Rash girl !” exclaimed Roland, almost sternly—“ you have destroyed my brother ! Why wither his young and happy heart, to revive a ruin like mine ? How can I return into a world where I must be received by the curses of him who shared with me the milk of the same breast ?”

“ Where are your arms ?” said Julie. “ For shame ! throw off your cowl, and don the knight—and your gloom will vanish like a cloud from the face of yonder

heaven! Men may call me a light-o'-love if they will; but here, in the silence of night, and on this lonely spot, will I buckle on the first armour of the Baron de Vavassour!"

And so saying, she ran into the hut, and, taking down his coat-of-mail and its appurtenances, clothed him, with a playful force, in his suit of steel.

"What sound is that?" said she, starting, when she had finished.

"It is the sound of rushing steps along the marsh, and of leaping across its wide and deep chasms."

"Pray Heaven, then, it be only my foster-brother!"

"They are the steps of a man in armour—of a knight!"

Julie clasped the hand of her lover, trembling. It was only then the true nature of her situation broke upon her mind! The next moment Claude looked down over the brink of the promontory.

"Julie!" cried he, "my life! are you safe?"

He stopped short; for he saw his mistress in the arms of a knight!

"Hold, madman!" shouted Roland.

But it was too late; Claude had already taken the fatal leap; he landed with a heavy fall upon the fragment on which they stood; and, breaking away from its insecure hold, it plunged sullenly, and then floated out into the lake. The two knights contrived to support their mistress, although the whole party were nearly precipitated into the gulf.

"Behold your brother!" said Julie.

"Claude!"

“ Roland ! Alive ! O God, what a meeting ! ”

“ We are sinking — we shall be lost ! ” exclaimed Julie.

“ May Heaven forbid ! ” replied De Vavassour ; “ yet we cannot all be saved. Our spongy vessel, saturated by the torrents of rain which fell to-day, will separate in another moment, if not relieved of a part of its load. Farewell, sweet Julie ; farewell, beloved brother ! When lightened of this weight of armour, and the useless limbs it covers, your raft will in all probability float till you receive assistance from the shore.” And so saying, he would have leaped into the lake, had he not been caught at the same moment by Claude and Julie.

“ Roland,” said the latter, calmly, “ your life would be a useless sacrifice, for I now feel that Julie never can be mine ; ” and with a sudden spring he had almost cleared the edge. A struggle took place between the brothers, which might have seemed to a spectator to have been a hostile combat ; while Julie, filling the air with her screams, clung to the necks of both. The consequence may be foreseen. The frail raft began to separate beneath their feet, piece by piece.

The inmates of the Vieux Château, who had been alarmed by the warder, were by this time astir ; but there was no boat nearer than half a league. Torches were seen flying in every direction along the shore, their reflection contrasting in the water with that of the pale beams of the moon. The alarm-bell began to toll, and was answered from the neighbouring châteaux ; and a bale-fire blazed up from the keep, which produced a

corresponding flame, at nearly regular distances, all round the valley of the marsh. Village and château were alike deserted by their inhabitants, who rushed down half-naked to the shores of the dead lake. Boats were manned on the instant ; and where there were no boats, stout swimmers plunged into the tide. Some of them turned back in despair ; others continued for a time to traverse the black waters—which now exhibited no trace of their victims, save here and there a fragment of earth drifting with the breeze.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE ABBEY OF GRESTAIN.

AFTER leaving the Marais Vernier, which is at a little distance from the river, we directed again our steps towards the banks, and arrived at the small village of La Roque. The fertility of the marsh, it appears, still continues; for a pear-tree here has the reputation of producing four hundred gallons of perry in the year! Proceeding towards the rocky promontory, called the Pointe de la Roque, we fell in with a cavern, inscribed with the names of numerous travellers, who had taken this ingenious method of immortalising themselves. This cavern, it seems, was the refuge of a certain Gere-mer, or Berenger, the abbot of Pentalle, whose monks had conspired against his life. These holy men had expected to be governed by one chosen from their own body, and, in order to get rid of the stranger, fixed a sharp blade perpendicularly in his bed, expecting that, as he lay down to rest, it would spit him through and through. Geremer, however, "inspired by Heaven," as the chronicle says, discovered the steel-trap that was laid for him, and retiring to the church, passed the rest of the night in prayer.

In the morning he called the monks into the monastery, and throwing himself at their feet, besought them to choose an abbot from among themselves, and

permit him to take up his abode in a cavern, a dependency of the convent. They of course complied, desiring nothing better; and Geremer betook himself to the den now before us, where he passed his days in fasting, and his nights in weeping and praying. The renown of his sanctity at length reached the ears of Saint Ouen, who besought him to return to the spiritual government of Pentalle; and Geremer, tired, perhaps, of the cavern, was about to comply. He was still further induced to this step by the apparent repentance of his monks, who waited on him in procession to solicit his return. A day was accordingly appointed; but on the preceding night, Geremer was translated to Heaven! The monks cried, "A miracle!" and so did the people. The fortunate abbot had ascended like Elijah, leaving only his gown behind, which was found by the fishermen floating in the Seine.

The view from the summit of La Roque is remarkably fine. The opposite bank of the river seems to be formed of white cliffs, descending abruptly to the water's edge. On the right hand the picture is terminated by Lillebonne, seen beyond the point of Quillebœuf; on the left, the eye ranges unimpeded over the ocean.

The promontory is composed of a perpendicular rock, or rather mass of rocks, one hundred and fifty feet high. On the west it forms the angle of a deep bay, almost filled up by an enormous bank, and into which the little river Rille discharges itself. This bank, covered in many places with grass, was formerly a league in diameter, but is now much less extensive. Its name is the Banc du Nord.

The next village on the banks is Berville, situated at the opposite angle of the bay. Of this village we find the following memorandum in our note-book, written while sailing up the Seine in a steam-boat : “ At the fishing hamlet of Berville, the land sinks ; the vegetable world assumes a more delicate green ; and the whole place looks like a little paradise.” And this is indeed the aspect it would present in a picture ; but the literary artist is obliged to look closer. If the voyage of life were like the steam-boat voyage of the Seine, the prospect of heaven would lose its value ; but, alas ! we have many a creek to enter on the way, and many a sand-bank to touch upon ; and both the man and the author often find that the object which looks most beautiful at a distance is the most destitute of attraction when exposed to a nearer view. Berville is a miserable hamlet, inhabited by poor fishermen, who are just able to live on the produce of their nets and their labour in the fields. The fish caught here are in general small, and some possess a flavour of the most fearful description. We should like to see an amateur angler sit down to a dish of these delicacies of his own catching, rather than give a few sous to the fishermen for his dinner. They are commonly used (except by mistake) for fattening fowls ; but unless care is taken to feed the animals on other diet for some weeks afterwards, even hunger is scared from the board.

Among the other fish caught at Berville are crabs, eels, flounders — and whales. Some years ago, there was one hooked of the last-mentioned species, which measured five feet in diameter. A French author,

however, mentions, that such kind of trouts have of late years "become scarce." Herons, swans, curlews, and a great many other birds of migratory habits, are found on the coast in autumn, and captured by the fishermen, whose dominion includes both the air and the water. One of these, a sort of duck, called the *tadorne*, immediately on landing proceeds to the nearest rabbit-burrow, and turning out the inhabitants, establishes himself in their *cosy* corner. The rabbits, however, are speedily avenged; for the fishermen watch patiently at the hole till he comes out again, and arrest him for the burglary.

The next commune to Berville inland is Conteville, possessed originally by Hellouin, a Norman gentleman, who married Arlette, the mistress of Robert the Devil, and mother of William the Conqueror. After becoming Countess of Conteville, she presented her lord with two sons—Odon, afterwards the famous Bishop of Bayeux, and Robert, the Count of Mortain; both of whom, accompanied by their father, followed the banner of William into England.

When William at last was carried from the siege of Mantes to die in the monastery near Rouen, now the church of Saint Gervaise,\* Hellouin, who had faithfully followed his fortunes, was still beside him.

"The body of the king," says Thierry, "was left forsaken for some hours; but at last the priests and monks arranged a procession. Neither his son, nor his brother, nor any of his relations, were near; not one

\* See page 161.

offered to undertake his obsequies ; and it was a private knight called Hellouin who took upon him the trouble and expense. He transported the body in a hearse, attended by mourners, to the bank of the Seine, and thence down the river in a boat, and by sea to the city of Caen."

Pursuing our wanderings from Berville, we climb a hill called Mont Courel, from which Havre is seen to great advantage. There is here an excavation called the *Fosse Glame*, which has occasioned some speculation. The name is supposed to be a corruption of Guillaume ; and the Conqueror is said to have posted above the cave one of his corps of observation at the time he left the Dives for England. Descending Mont Courel on the other side, we find ourselves at the village of Grestain.

The site of the ancient abbey of this name is still distinguished ; and as the remains of the beautiful Arlette, the mother of William the Conqueror, are beneath, it must be interesting ground both to English and Normans. A chapel was erected here by Hellouin, mentioned above, who afterwards married this frail and famous lady. This good deed was performed in consequence of a vow made to the Virgin in sickness ; and when Hellouin found that he actually did recover from a very disagreeable disease (said by some to have been leprosy), he resolved to be still better than his word. He founded an abbey on the spot, which was destined to occupy some space in the history of monachal refinement.

In the year 1090 the decay of the original monas-



tery began to take place, through the rapacity of Henry Beauclerc of England; and in 1122 it was burnt almost to the ground by an accidental fire. It was soon reconstructed, however, and at length reached such a pitch of prosperity, that at one time it counted two hundred monks. In 1364 the English destroyed, and half a century afterwards rebuilt it. But its success was over; and in the middle of the fifteenth century, only twenty-three remained of the crowd of holy men whom its princely revenues had fattened for heaven.

In the twelfth century some little disorders took place in the monastery, no doubt incidental to the crossness usually caused by want of room. The superior, however, who was a grave and crabbed personage, took the matter in dudgeon, and retired to England. In vain the Bishop of Lisieux implored him to return; and as his refusal might have led the censorious world to imagine that things were still worse than the reality, this prelate took a precognition, as we call it in Scotch law, on the spot. His letter to Pope Alexander III., dated in 1159, describes, somewhat harshly, the manner of these poor men, devoted to a life of religious mortification.

“ They forget their religious duties,” says he. And no wonder. What mundane memory could contain the multitudinous duties of a monk? A bell was hung for the very purpose of acting like the flappers of Laputa; and if any forgetfulness took place, we feel confident that it must have been owing to the belman. Belmen,

it must be recollected, are poets by profession; and poets are never sober men.

“They are in the habit,” continueth the bishop, “of ducking sick people seven times in the convent well.” Very properly. If a patient stands such an operation, he must be an impostor, and should be well drubbed into the bargain.

“A woman,” he goeth on, “on being ducked seven times, in the dead of winter, died in their hands.” This was the fault of the season, not of the monks. But it was not pretended that the well was destitute of virtue; and will the prelate tell us, that the virtues of a holy well depend upon the state of the atmosphere? Besides, the woman could not have died in better hands.

“The cook of the abbey,” saith he, “being offended with one of the monks for calling upon his wife, began to scold him; and, from less to more, it came to pass, that the monk caught up a knife, and struck the cook so violently upon the head, that his blood sprung over the dishes he had been preparing for dinner.” A most frivolous charge! Every one knows that “a cook, when cooking, is a fury;” and if he chose to be so absurd and indecent as to suppose that a priest could have had evil intentions of any kind, he was rightly served. The monk knew full well, that a saucy cook could not understand any thing but the arms of the flesh.

“The procureur of the convent, after getting tipsy in the refectory at dinner, struck two of the brethren with a knife, who knocked him down with cudgels.” No-

thing could be more proper. If the monks had been laymen, they would have cut out the attorney's tongue, since he had given up using that instrument against the public, and taken to cold steel. Remembering, however, that the church "*abhorret à sanguine*," they merely floored the litigant with their staves. Upon the whole, we are of opinion, considering all things (*and especially the state of the other convents*), that the bishop's complaint was vexatious, and the decision of the pontiff unjust, who decreed that the establishment should be reformed.

The abbey, which possessed not only revenues in France, but considerable property in the city of London, enjoyed latterly only six thousand francs of rent; and when the revolution impiously compelled the monks to work for their subsistence like other men, the buildings were bought by a retired merchant of Honfleur, who constructed with the materials a dwelling-house upon the spot. Only a score of years before this, however, there was enough remaining to testify the care which the holy fathers took of the outward man. In an oblong apartment, so constructed that a constant current of air ran through it, were still seen the hooks on which the monks hung their provisions. At the bottom of this larder there was a well, extending the whole length of the apartment, where fresh-water fish were fattened for the table; and near it, another of salt water, in which the denizens of the ocean were kept alive till they were wanted. A village near the walls of the abbey, called Saint Ouen de Grestain, shared its fate. It was formerly a considerable place, and was reckoned among the

“gros bourgs” of Normandy; but was destroyed, first by fire, and then by water. A small portion of its church is still seen; and at low water, some vestiges of its habitations may be discovered among the sands of the river.

Odon, the first abbot of Grestain, was a very remarkable churchman. He was the son of Hellouin, count de Conteville, as we have already said, and possessing, it seems, a natural turn for ecclesiastical affairs, was made bishop of Bayeux at seventeen. He followed his brother, the Conqueror, to England at thirty-two, and celebrated mass before the army on the morning of the victory of Hastings. After mass, he mounted a scaffold, and preached a sermon, in which he advised them to make a vow never to eat meat on that day of the week, provided the God of battles would fight on their side. The Normans willingly took the vow; and the high priest, descending from his pulpit, buckled a hauberk over his gown, threw down the mass-book, and took up a lance, and, springing upon a white steed, dashed into the *mêlée*. When the bloody business of the day was over, he became the churchman again in the twinkling of an eye, and sung a funeral mass for the victims of his valour. The town of Dover fell to the share of this priestly soldier, and, turning out the inhabitants, he established his dependants in their houses and lands.

When William was firmly enough fixed in his new throne to make an excursion to Normandy (which occurred in six months!), he left Odon behind as his lieutenant. The ecclesiastic, however, was fond of money—and, we dare be sworn, of spending it—and

his exactions were levied with so little address, that even the people of England, who had bent their heads like steers to the yoke, became crusty. However, William had only put his foot upon their necks; Odon put his hand into their pockets—and this is quite another thing. But the rattling priest was not dismayed. He suppressed the tumult; and having nothing else to think of, began to consider what should hinder him from becoming pope. He hired some Italian priests to spread abroad the report that he was to succeed Gregory VII., purchased a palace in Rome, sent presents to the cardinals, and, above all things, assembling a band around him of stout Norman knights, set forth to storm the papacy.

He was probably aware that his brother would think this was carrying matters too far, for he did not await his return. Unfortunately, however, they met near the Isle of Wight, William hastening back to put a stop to the operations of the bishop; and all having landed on the island, the king accused him, before his assembled Normans, of divers political offences.

“Advise me, I pray you,” said William, in concluding his address, “how to act towards such a brother.” Not a tongue hazarded a reply.

“Seize him!” shouted the king. Not a hand stirred.

“Then I shall!” And he caught hold of the bishop.

“I am a priest!” cried Odon; “I am the minister of the Lord; and the Pope alone has the power to judge me.”

“It is not a priest whom I judge,” said William, without relaxing his gripe, “but a servant whom I



arrest !” And he immediately handed him over to his guards, sent him a prisoner to Normandy, and shut him up there in a fortress, where he remained till his brother’s death.

Restored at length to liberty, he retired into his abbey of Grestain, and became so exceedingly holy, that all men thought his adventures were ended in the world. Shortly after, however, he dashed over to England to join in the war against William Rufus ; and, shutting himself up in the town of Rochester, was besieged, and forced to capitulate. He was allowed, notwithstanding, to march out with arms and baggage ; much to the dissatisfaction of the soldiery, who were very anxious to have the pleasure of hanging him. He again retired to the abbey of Grestain ; but popped out almost instantly to marry the King of France to Bertrade of Anjou, a lady whom Philip had carried off from her husband. At last, imagining that his peccadilloes were numerous enough to demand an excursion to Jerusalem, and fearing that it might be dangerous to delay it longer, he set out for the Holy Land. It will be felt, however, that Odon was not a likely man to don the weeds of a pilgrim. On the contrary, he clothed himself in helm and hauberk, hung his shield round his neck, and sallied forth, with lance in hand, to join the crusade of Peter the Hermit. But the infidels were happily saved from the meditated visit. He was attacked by illness in Sicily, and closed his turbulent career at Palermo in 1098.

In the reign of Louis XV. the abbot of Grestain was M. de Boismont, who, although a member of the

Academy, would not deserve mention here but for a pleasant anecdote connected with his name. M. Boismont, it seems, was a very rich man, but did not like to pay his debts; and one day a creditor from a distance coming in person to demand his money, called by mistake upon the Abbot of Voisnon, at Belleville. The abbot was not at home; but on receiving the message, addressed the following note to his visitor:

“I am sorry, sir, you did not see me; for you would have discovered the difference between the Abbot of Boismont and me. He is young, and I am old; he is strong and healthy, and I am weak and ailing; he preaches, and I have need of being preached to; he has a large and rich abbey, and mine is very little; he is in the Academy without knowing why, and every body asks why I am not. In fine, he owes you a pension, and I have only the desire to be your debtor. I am, &c.”

The last monk of this famous abbey was an Irishman, called Albiac, who died in 1814, near Honfleur, at the age of ninety.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## ARLETTE.

THERE is not one stone of the mausoleum of Arlette to be seen to-day — of that frail daughter of a furrier, herself the daughter of as frail a princess, who gave a dynasty of kings to England, whose illustrious line extended through a period of five hundred years. If all that historians tell be true, there is something repulsive, though romantic, in the story of her mother. She is accused by her contemporaries of a long series of misconduct; and later writers search with avidity after the faults which were so great as to blot her very name out of the chronicles of the times. This, however, is needless. The fact of a princess loving a tradesman, was in the eleventh century a crime compared to which parricide would have been reckoned a mere indiscretion.

This was the epoch of pure feudality. The human race was divided into two species, the noble and the plebeian; and no analogy drawn from natural history could give any idea of the distance between them. It was not merely that the mass of the people were serfs or slaves, whether under the name of *villeins* or *bourgeois*; but even the freedmen under the nobles, in many instances, renounced their liberty, in order to sink into an easier species of despotism. It is true that, as

serfs, they might be beaten, mutilated, or even killed, by their master, with absolute impunity; but still being, to all intents and purposes, his property, he was less likely to exercise this extremity of power over them than over the “freedmen,” who belonged to nobody.

While such insane distinctions existed, was it wonderful that a king’s daughter should have lost caste, and been thrown forth to prowl with the Pariahs of society, when convicted of having loved—a furrier?

Edward Ironsides, the Saxon-Englishman, was a king and a knight, yet he refused to shut up his daughter in a dungeon, which proves that he possessed the feelings of a father stronger than most men of his day. He cast her off, however, and banished her from the kingdom,—without retinue, without money, the object of scorn and loathing to that whole class of persons whom she had been accustomed to call “the world.”

And now comes the proof of the young lady’s innocence of any crime but that of loving, “not wisely, but too well.” Had she been sunk in profligacy, as we are told,—cast away, and abandoned as she was now, a wanderer and a beggar, would that man, who had enjoyed the smiles of the princess, have sought to share the fortunes of the homeless, friendless girl? We think not. The two lovers, however, met in Normandy; and, in the midst of care, and fatigue, and hunger, continued to love on. They had three children; and with these pledges, it is said, of a passion which had survived the tests of poverty and misery,

they wandered about the country, begging alms from town to town.

We next find them—by one of those magical changes of fortune which occur every day before our eyes, and yet are not reckoned the less magical—settled in the town of Falaise. The furrier is again among his furs ; and, by dint of industry and economy, has attained to a station of tolerable respectability among his fellow-tradesmen. Their children are grown up ; and the eldest, whose name is Herlève (*her*, illustrious, and *leve*, dear, in Danish, say the learned Thebans), inherits all the beauty of her all-beautiful mother.

One day, Duke Robert, alias Robert the Devil, walking round the tower of his château, was attracted by the interesting sight of some young girls washing clothes in the river below. Robert was a connoisseur in female beauty, and his attention was therefore riveted upon one of the group—tall and splendidly lovely, like Diana among her nymphs. Her feet, more especially, as the Roman de Rou informs us, were whiter than the snow—or even than the fleur-de-lis ; and the astonished duke fell in love, plump.

“ Des piés et des jambes parurent,  
Qui si très beaux et si blancs furent,  
Que ce fut bien au duc adris,  
Que neifs ert pâle efflor de lys,  
Avers la soe grant blanchor,  
Merveille i torna s’amor.”

Robert was the sovereign prince of the country ; Arlette (for so Herlève is modernised) was the daughter



of a furrier : it is needless to say more. The old chronicles, notwithstanding, go into an absurd detail of the formalities observed in the wooing ; although even they give us an instructive glimpse of the manners of that barbarous age, by disclosing that the negotiations of the duke were carried on through the father.

Arlette in due time became the mother of a son, who was called William ; and to this child of love, Robert the Devil, on setting out for Palestine, bequeathed his ducal throne. The holy pilgrim died, as we have related, at Nicea ; and William took possession of his heritage by force of arms, endowing his mother with part of the spoils he ravished from the rebellious nobles.

At this time the Conqueror must have been only a boy, for Arlette was yet young when she married Hellouin, and brought him the dowry conquered by her son. She died about the year 1090, and was buried in the abbey of Grestain, beside her husband, who had preceded her.

The history of the amour of Robert the Devil and Arlette, which proved to be of such vast and permanent importance to all Europe, is sung in Normandy, and more especially at Falaise, in verses whose gaiety and light-heartedness are unsoiled either by licentiousness, or its more suspicious opposite, prudery.

“ De Guillaume le Conquérant  
Chantons l’historiette ;  
Il naquit, cet illustre enfant,  
D’une simple amourette.  
Le hasard fait souvent les grands.

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Normands,

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Fille d'un simple pelletier,

Elle était gentille ;

Robert, en gallant chevalier,

Vint lui conter fleurette :

L'amour égale tous les rangs.

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Normands,

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Falaise dans son noble tour

Vit entrer la fillette,

Et c'est là que le dieu d'amour

Finit l'historiette.

Anglais, honorez ces amans !

Vive le fils d'Arlette !

Normands,

Vive le fils d'Arlette !”

Near Grestain, but a little way from the river, is the village of Carbec, where there is another well, quite as good as that of the monks of Grestain. Its patron is Saint Méen, who was born in Brittany, in the sixth century. When he came to the banks of the Seine, he neither went to “ kirk nor market,” nor did he advertise, like modern apostles, that “ a sermon would be preached on such a day.” He retired into a wild and lonely valley, and there prayed, fasted, and scourged himself, till the whole population of the district came flocking around him to admire his piety. If our field and street preachers would only take the hint, they

may be assured that, in asking for bread, they would not, as now, receive a stone. They would soon be in the capacity to put a joint of meat in their pot, whereas at present they are only treated with cabbages.

The very lepers at last came to Saint Méen, imagining that a saint of such extra holiness could do something even for them—nor were they disappointed. He prescribed for them a plunge in a neighbouring well—and *faith*; and it is needless to say, after what we have declared, of our own knowledge, on the subject—that the patients were cured. A large crucifix now directs the eye to the holy well, which runs at its foot; but the unclean of our day drink its waters instead of washing with them; and the successor of Saint Méen, in the guardianship of the spring, is so worldly-minded as to charge for the draught, like an apothecary.

This mercenary proceeding is the more unwarrantable, as the water is well known to have no virtue in itself, deriving all its efficacy from the faith of the drinker. A visit to the spring is called the Pilgrimage of Saint Méen; and the devotee, whatever be his rank or wealth, must *beg his way barefooted* to the spot. This act of humility is followed by an act of prayer, not to God, but to Saint Méen, and then by an act of faith; and after drinking as much as he can hold, if not more, the pilgrim returns home in the “sure and certain hope” that he is cured.

There is a small church near the place, and a cemetery, planted with apple-trees, like many others in this part of Normandy. The erection is of considerable antiquity, as we find by the melancholy strain of Olivier

Basselin, a French poet of the fourteenth century, which runs almost in this manner, —

“ Where friends, so dear in life, are laid,  
We plant the goodly apple-tree,  
To tell that the beloved dead —  
Liked cider just as well as we !”

By a relic of antiquity found near the church, we discover that on the very spot where they are busy to-day in the cure of cutaneous maladies, the Romans occupied themselves in doctoring the eyes. The relic was one of those stone stamps with which the ancient empirics sealed their phials; and the one in question belonged to an oculist of the second century, called Lollius Fromimus, who vended a collyrium which had the property of imparting brilliance to the eyes. Ointments of this kind, which were applied with a fine pencil, were carried throughout the whole empire—no lady could possibly be without them; and even the possessors of the finest eyes in the Roman dominions sought by this means to “ gild the refined gold.” It is added, however, by those antiquaries who do a little more than search after names and dates, that the quacks must have derived their chief subsistence from the remote and ignorant provinces, their seals being found there in much greater numbers than near the capital.

At a short distance to the south of Carbec is a little valley, known by the name of the Val Anglais, which tradition describes as the site of a combat in which our countrymen were cut in pieces by the French. It took place at the time when Charles VI. besieged Honfleur, then in our possession; and the victims were a marauding

party that had come out to pillage the country. The inhabitants at first fled; but gathering courage, they united in a body, enclosed the English in a narrow defile, and, overwhelming them with numbers, massacred them almost to a man. Even now, when the earth is removed from any part of the valley, it is common to find human bones, which testify of that bloody day; and the Norman peasants, proud of the heroic remembrance, boast of the prowess of their forefathers.

Charles was present in person at the above-mentioned siege, and passed a night in the abbey of Grestain. He had just buried the heart of Agnes Sorel at Jumièges, and now found himself treading on the dust of Arlette!

“King Charles VII.” says the *Chronique de Normandie*, “set out from Jumièges, and went to lie at an abbey called Grestain, two leagues from the said Honnefleu; and all those who were at the said siege made great approaches, ditches, and mines, and shot bombs, cannons, and flying engines, which greatly disheartened the said place. And the English were so cast down, that fear and necessity constrained them to render; whereupon an undertaking was entered into that the said place should be so surrendered, provided, on the eighteenth day of February following, the English were beaten in closed lists, which were accordingly prepared for the combat with great diligence by the French; nevertheless, the said English failed to present themselves, and compeared nowise.”

The custom alluded to above was common in those martial times. The siege of a town was considered a trial of skill and courage; and if the defenders, on find-



ing that they were likely to get the worst of it, chose to appeal to another mode of deciding the question, they were permitted to do so by the courtesy of chivalry. This new trial by battle took place in closed lists, and was decided either by one champion, or by a troop, as might be agreed.

These times, so glorious for poets and romancers, are gone by; and in our vulgar day, a cannon fired by the hand of a peasant would destroy all the knights of the Round Table at one shot. At the era of chivalry the wars were much less bloody than ours; and, in fact, a pair of knights might hammer all day long on one another's helmets and cuirasses, without doing a great deal of mischief. So much was this the case, that it was by no means uncommon for the combatants, when spent with fatigue, to arrange a truce for an hour or two. They then sat down side by side on the grass; and when they had rested and refreshed themselves, got up and went to it again like heroes. We are not sure, however, that gunpowder has, upon the whole, injured the cause of humanity. It has brought men more upon a par; and as success, therefore, depends not so much upon individual valour as upon numbers and discipline, the exchequer of the kingdom is the grand oracle to be consulted. War empties the pocket; no kingdom can go to war with empty pockets; and thus national poverty acts as the preserver of mankind. But, as yet, we are only in the way to peace. When such instruments as Mr. Perkins's steam-gun come to be pointed at one nation by another, the whole world will take the alarm, and cry—Hold! hold! Wars will then

cease, and men fall upon some other mode of redressing their grievances, or despoiling their neighbours.

It was at the siege of Pontaudemer, a town at no great distance to the north-east of this part of the river, that the Normans first became acquainted with artillery. Perhaps the transition from guns to ladies may be thought somewhat sudden; yet as they are both destroyers, in their several ways, of mankind, we must indulge ourselves in quoting from a charter of John Lackland, dated in 1203, certain regulations respecting the women of Pontaudemer.

“When a woman,” says the royal lawgiver, “is convicted of being shrewish and quarrelsome, a cord shall be passed under her arms, and she shall be thrown into the water.

“When a man insults a woman, he shall be subjected to a fine of ten sous; but if it is the woman who insults the man, in addition to the fine of ten sous, she shall be thrown into the water!”

“Evil-minded persons,” says a Norman writer, in commenting on the above, “hence conclude that the quarrelsome and shrewish temper of the ladies of Pontaudemer goes back to all antiquity; but, for us, we have proofs to the contrary!” We are grieved to find so heavy a charge against the fair ones of Pontaudemer admitted, or rather taken for granted, by a *compatriote*. But what does he mean by having proofs that this acknowledged unhappy temper has not descended to them from antiquity? He may, no doubt, have his reasons for calumniating the present race; but why be so anxious to defend the reputation of their grandmothers?

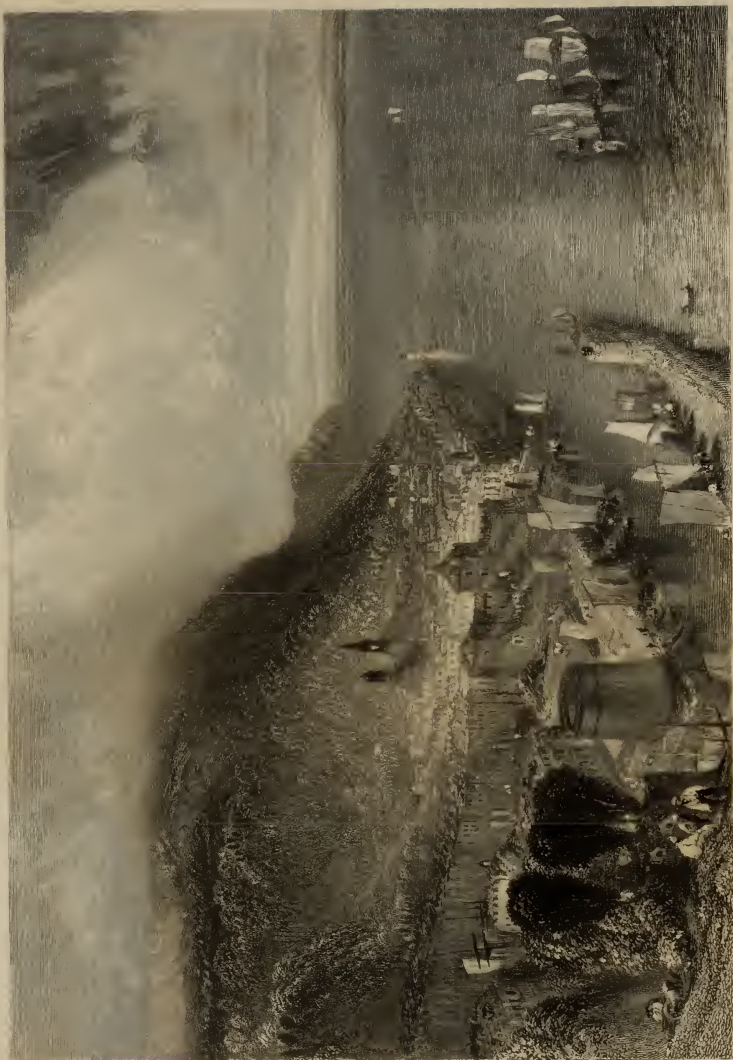
“ In these unjust and unchivalrous measures,” continues he, “ we see only the trace of those English laws, according to which, even in our own days, husbands, discontented with their companions, are not ashamed of selling them in full market with a rope about their necks !” We have not a word to say to this. We had before attributed the great value of cordage in England to the number of persons who were hanged, or who hanged themselves ; but the mystery is now cleared up. With such a law in operation, who would wonder at the high price of ropes ?\*

At Beuzeville, a bourg not far from Pontaudemer, one of the greatest cattle-fairs of the country is held. It attracts more than ten thousand people to the spot. The patron is Saint Hillier, whose altar in the church is on that day decorated with fresh-gathered flowers. This saint inhabited a hermitage in the island of Jersey, where his head was eventually cut off by a pirate. But this was not all : he caught the head, as it fell, in his hands, and walked off with it for more than a hundred steps ! The event is commemorated in the following elegant verses in the “ *Acta Sanctorum* :”—

“ Hunc, cum confecerat sitis et macies,  
Minuit capite Vandalis acies :  
Novum quod mortuus propriis manibus  
Cervicem detulit plus centum passibus.”

When an altar was erected to the saint at Beuzeville,

\* We cannot allow ourselves to quiz M. de Saint Amand without acknowledging that we received great advantage from his “ *Lettres d'un Voyageur à l'Embouchure de la Seine*.” He is a native of the banks of the river, and well acquainted with their localities.







the people called him by mistake Saint *Délié*; and hence, even to this day, you find mothers, whose children are not sufficiently active, crowding to his festival to supplicate him to *délié* their limbs, or make them supple. It is said that these petitions are very efficacious.

At Saint Clair, after passing Jobles and Fiquefleur, we find another fair, but of a different kind. The crowd who assemble here are mingled with servants, whose purpose it is to sell themselves for a time, and with pilgrims who come to solicit the good offices of Saint *Clair* in restoring their sight. Saints are thus chosen by the populace by their name, as in the case of Saint *Délié*; but when no name can be found suitable to the complaint, or when there is reason to fear, from want of success in their prayers, that they may have chosen a wrong one, recourse is had to a species of divination. The names of numerous saints are written on ivy-leaves, which are then put into holy water; and the next morning, the leaf that is the most spotted and injured reveals the name of him who is to cure them. Should the trial fail, however, which it sometimes does, in consequence of there being several of the leaves in the same state, the whole of the names are taken, and presented collectively to the priest, who comprehends them all in the Mass.

In a few minutes more we find ourselves at Honfleur, the last town on the left bank of the Seine; a description of which may be read at a glance in the beautiful view annexed. Honfleur was once a place of considerable importance. We have already alluded to

its siege by Charles VII., at which time it had been in the hands of the English for ten years. The fortifications were afterwards battered to pieces in the war of the League, and have never since been rebuilt. Its commerce has deserted to the opposite port of Havre; the herrings, which formed one of the principal resources of the inhabitants, have left its coasts; and the Seine is daily filling up its harbour with mud and sand.

But though all is poverty and gloom in the town, without there is the beauty and magnificence of nature. From the hill included in Turner's drawing, the view of the ocean and the river is almost unrivalled. There we pause to look again upon the beautiful and majestic Seine, to which, as well as to the reader, we must now bid — farewell? we hope not — *au revoir!*

THE END.

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J. MOYES, CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.



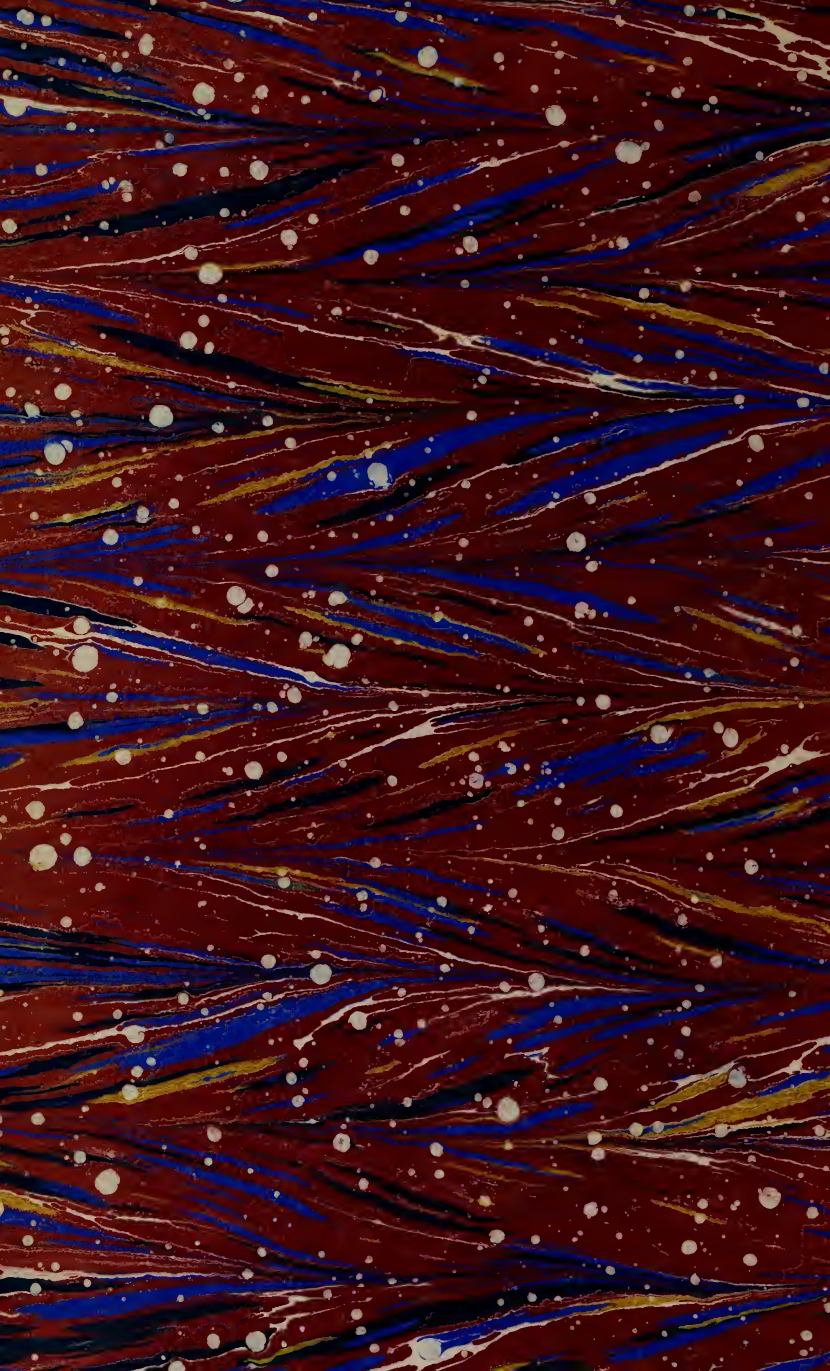


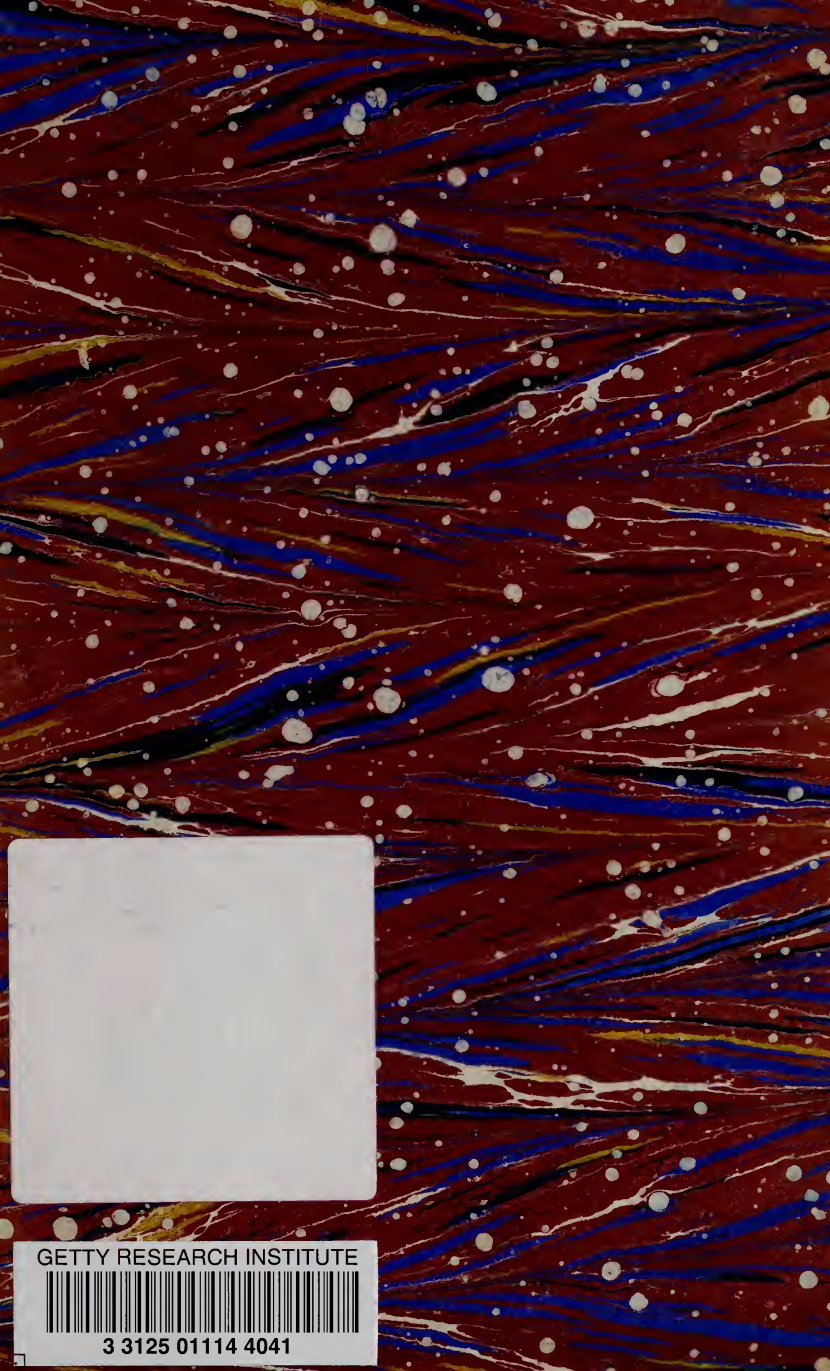






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